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SATURDAY, JANUARY 8, 2005

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Attack on Bradley kills 7 GIs in Iraq

2 Marines killed in other incidents in deadliest day since December

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Talk reveals division on votes

Marine commander says Iraq is ready while some local officials believe fair and safe elections are not possible

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PHOTOS BY JOSEPH GIORDANO/Stars and Stripes

Above: Lt. Col. Gary Stevens, commander of the 1st Battalion, 23rd Marine Regiment, seated at right, tells local mayors through a translator, center, that elections will go ahead as scheduled on Jan. 30. Top left: Along the road to Baghdad, a U.S. Marine from the 1st Battalion, 23rd Marine Regiment pulls security from atop a Humvee. One of the main concerns the mayors expressed was a lack of security in the area known as the Sunni Triangle.

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News Tracker ... What's new with old news

States

Spector shooting transcripts: Rock music producer Phil Spector initially told police he mistakenly shot actress Lana Clarkson, though he has since changed his story to suggest she committed suicide, according to newly released grand jury transcripts.

Alhambra, Calif., Police Officer Beatrice Rodriguez testified that Spector told officers at his home, "What's wrong with you guys? What are you doing? I didn't mean to shoot her. It was an accident."

Spector, 64, who created rock 'n' roll's "wall of sound" recording technique, is charged with murdering Clarkson at his Alhambra mansion in early 2003. He has pleaded not guilty and is free on \$1 million bail.

The Los Angeles Times reported Friday on the contents of the five volumes of grand jury transcripts, which include testimony from police, women who had been previously threatened by Spector, and friends of Clarkson.

Three women also testified that Spector, in separate incidents, had acted recklessly and threatened them with a gun.

Blake trial: Robert Blake cried out and put his hands to his head when he was told his wife Michael Coffey, but a police detective testified the actor didn't shed any tears.

John Michael Coffey was the latest in a string of prosecution witnesses to question the sincerity of Blake's reactions on the night of May 4, 2001, when his wife, Bonny Lee Blake, was shot to death. "I noticed he didn't have any tears. It didn't seem to me to be a sincere cry," Coffey testified Thursday at Blake's murder trial.

Blake claims he and his wife went to his car on a nearby street after eating dinner at Vitello's restaurant, and he left her to return to the restaurant to retrieve his gun, which he had forgotten. He claims he found Blake bleeding when he got back to the car.

Crematory case: A former crematory operator who admitted dumping 34 bodies and passing off cement dust as their ashes pleaded guilty Friday to Tennessee charges and was sentenced to 12 years in prison.

Ray Brent Marsh, 31, listened to a series of statements from Tennessee relatives of those whose bodies were mishandled at his Tusculum Crematory in Georgia and then apologized. Marsh could be eligible for parole in four years, Circuit Judge Carroll L. Ross said in handing down the sentence.

The sentencing was part of an agreement between officials in Tennessee and Georgia, where Marsh pleaded guilty in November to 787 counts of theft, abuse of a corpse, burial service fraud and making false statements. The deal calls for the Tennessee sentence to be served concurrently with the same recommended sentence in Georgia.

San Diego mayoral vote: Three voters asked a court Thursday to overturn the election of San Diego Mayor Dick Murphy and install a write-in candidate, saying more than 5,000 ballots were unfairly thrown out. The voters filed the lawsuit alleging the county registrar violated state election law by disqualifying ballots on which voters wrote the name of candidate Donna Frye but failed to darken adjoining ovals.

If those ballots had been counted, Frye would have won the Nov. 2 election, the suit claimed.

Aaliyah crash: Aaliyah's record company cannot sue the video producer that arranged the airplane flight on which the singer and eight others crashed and died in the 2001 crash in Manhattan appeals court ruled Thursday.



Midwest storms: Jeannette Serrato, front, looks on in shock Thursday as she begins to see the devastation caused by flooding at her home south of Indianapolis, as neighbor Gary Henderson, back, escorts her through the water in his boat. Rivers were at or above flood stage at 30 locations around the state, according to the National Weather Service, and most of the streams were not expected to crest until Saturday. A pair of storms, meanwhile, were moving in on the West Coast. A regional winter storm warning was extended through Monday.

The state Supreme Court's Appellate Division dismissed the lawsuit brought by Blackground Records, which the singer partly owned, saying that in this case the singer's parents had a right to sue for her wrongful death. The court said the parents did so and were compensated.

Aaliyah had just finished shooting a music video when she and eight others were killed in the crash of a twin-engine Cessna as it left Marsh Harbor on Abaco Island in the Bahamas en route to Florida on Aug. 25, 2001. She was 22.

World

Mandela's son: Former President Nelson Mandela, a leading AIDS campaigner, won local and international praise Friday for disclosing that his son died of the disease.

The U.N. AIDS agency said Mandela's decision Thursday was an example of his unwavering leadership in the fight against stigma and discrimination associated with HIV.

Makgatho Mandela, who had been the former president's only surviving son, died Thursday at age 54.

Sub-Saharan Africa is home to some 70 percent of the 45 million people worldwide infected with HIV, the virus that causes AIDS. More than 5 million of South Africa's 45 million people are infected, more than in any other country.

Israeli-Palestinian conflict: Palestinian presidential front-runner Mahmoud Abbas canceled a campaign stop in Jerusalem on Friday, saying Israeli security arrangements would have embarrassed him, and Israel forced a second candidate to leave the city after he tried to pray at a holy site.

Meanwhile, outside the West Bank city of Nablus, Palestinian militants shooting from a moving car attacked a group of Israelis, killing one and wounding three, the Israeli military said. The Al Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades, a violent group linked to Abbas' Fatah movement, claimed responsibility.

The attack came two days before the Palestinian elections, and just a day after militant leaders in Nablus told Abbas they would support his efforts to reach a cease-fire with Israel. Also Friday, Israeli forces shot to death a 23-year-old Palestinian man walking near the Jewish settlement of Netzarim in the Gaza Strip, Palestinian security officials said. The Israeli army said the man was armed with an anti-tank missile and was suspected of planning an attack on the settlement.

Croatia election: The presidential candidate who disputed results of Croatia's weekend election said Friday he has now accept-

ed defeat and will instead run in the country's local election in the spring.

"I will respect the law," Boris Miksic said, two days after Croatia's highest judicial body rejected as "unfounded" his request that the election results be annulled and the vote repeated.

Belfast bank robbery: The Irish Republican Army committed last month's massive robbery of a Belfast bank, the Northern Ireland police commander bluntly announced Friday in a move that complicated the province's peacekeeping efforts.

Chief Constable Hugh Orde said his detectives probing the Dec. 20 theft at Northern Bank — when a hostage-taking gang stole an estimated \$50 million, the biggest all-cash robbery in history — were confident that members of the outlawed IRA planned it and carried it out.

The IRA and its allied Sinn Fein party have rejected mounting accusations of IRA involvement in the robbery. Speaking shortly before Orde, Sinn Fein deputy leader Martin McGuinness — a reputed IRA commander since the mid-1970s — said the IRA had told him it wasn't involved.

Spain's EU constitution pitch: Soccer stars, celebrity actors, singers and journalists on Friday kicked off a government campaign aimed at explaining the European Union's new constitution, as Spain prepares for a Feb. 20 referendum — the first popular vote in any EU country on the charter.

Recent surveys found that 89 percent of Spaniards knew little to nothing about the constitution. However, the surveys showed that the "yes" is likely to pass as 75 percent said they plan to vote in the referendum.

N. Korea accusations: North Korea said Friday it attached little significance to the planned visit next week by members of Congress and accused Washington of plotting to topple Pyongyang's communist regime.

A bipartisan congressional delegation is scheduled to visit North Korea next week, where a key topic of discussion will likely be the stalled six-nation talks on the North's nuclear weapons programs.

In a commentary posted Friday on Urlinkz4kidd.com, a North Korean government-run Web site, the regime said it was "seriously upset" because the United States was spreading a theory of a North Korean collapse. "The United States is hiding a dagger while talking about 'six-party talks' and the 'dispatch of a congressional delegation.'"

"We cannot help boasting our vigilance at this flagrant, sinister, two-faced attitude," it said.

Stories and photos from wire services

EUCOM welcomes paperless medical records program

Heidelberg first military hospital in Europe to implement new system

BY BEN MURRAY

Stars and Stripes

The centralized record-keeping system designed to replace servicemembers' and dependents' paper medical files is due to arrive at its first European hospital next month, heralding the start of an electronic evolution in the military health-care system.

Called the Composite Health Care System II, the new program eventually will store all military patients' medical information on a central database in Montgomery, Ala., signaling the final days of the stacks of handwritten documents traditionally carried by servicemembers.

Instead, all new records will be kept as electronic files in CHCS II, an upgrade that military medical officials said last week called a vast improvement to the existing system.

"Once this is done it should have incredible benefits. It's basically putting our foot in the right century," said Dr. Robert Walker, a physician and the deputy of primary care at the U.S. Army hospital in Heidelberg, Germany, which will be the first in Europe to implement the system. "It's basically putting our foot in the right century."

The benefits include the ability of doctors in military hospitals worldwide to view online a single, up-to-date record for each patient, eliminating duplicate files and preventing doctors from having to "start from scratch" when someone loses their paper record, Walker said.

Plus, the new electronic records will be legible, he said.

"It sounds really simple, but it makes a big difference in patient safety," Walker said.

The implementation of CHCS II is a massive government project that started heating up last year with information technology staff moving the last two years' worth of patients' records from the old system into the new database.

Implementing the software in hospitals requires large numbers

of new computers and printers for staff in the military's expansive medical network, and training for everyone from physicians to administrative staff.

Tina Coffman, CHCS program manager for the Europe Regional Medical Command, said Friday that she estimated "Landstuhl [Regional Medical Center] alone is getting 1,000 new pieces of hardware."

Implementation began in January at seven stateside military hospitals, and after Heidelberg will be installed at Landstuhl before moving on to other central European hospitals. By the end of 2006, the system will span all DOD hospitals and include dental records as well, Coffman said.

"There will be one medical record that will be available worldwide," Coffman said.

But like many medical remedies, CHCS II initially will have to hurt before it can heal, as Coffman and Walker warned that patients will see appointment back-ups starting in February as staff are trained on the new software.

During implementation phases, some nonessential and simple procedures also may have to be delayed, Walker said, to allow available staff to take care of priority cases.

"We're putting elective things off" at Heidelberg, he said.

And even proponents of the system like Walker and Coffman conceded that CHCS II, like any extensive new computer network, undoubtedly will see its share of bugs and setbacks before it runs smoothly.

"Patients need to be patient with us, if you will," Coffman said.

Coffman also said that while CHCS II does create an electronic file for records dating to August 2002, patients with longer medical histories that date back further will have to hold on to their trusty paper records, so doctors can refer to pre-CHCS II treatments.

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Farewell to a friend



PHOTOS BY TIMOTHY COMERFORD
Courtesy of the U.S. Navy



Above: Seabees gather Friday at the chapel at Naval Station Rota, Spain, to mourn Petty Officer 2nd Class Roland Atuwu. Atuwu, 26, died in a single-vehicle accident on New Year's Day in Spain. Originally from Virginia, he was a construction electrician with the base's Public Works Department. Left: James Chavez, a Navy petty officer, remembers Atuwu by telling stories of their friendship during Atuwu's memorial service.

Report: President might pay visit to troops in Wiesbaden

BY CHARLIE COON

Stars and Stripes

A Feb. 23 meeting in Mainz has been scheduled between President Bush and German Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder, according to several German media reports, which also stated that Bush might visit U.S. troops at nearby Wiesbaden Army Airfield.

The German reports quoted regional and national officials. The White House previously had announced Bush's plan to visit Germany following the Feb. 22 meetings in Brussels, Belgium, with NATO and European Union leaders.

But two military spokespersons

in Wiesbaden — Army Maj. Michael Indovina of the Wiesbaden-based 1st Armored Division and Donna Dean, public affairs officer for the 221st Base Support Battalion — both said they were unaware of any plan for the president to come there.

A State Department spokesman also said he did not know if Bush was coming to the Frankfurt area.

"All the details are being worked out as far as we know," said Jeff Arnold, the assistant public affairs officer for the U.S. Consulate in Frankfurt. "We're not going to say anything until the White House announces further

details. We're anxiously awaiting."

Bush has not visited Germany since May 2002, where he faced large anti-war demonstrations during a trip to Berlin.

Schroeder was a vocal opponent of the U.S.-led invasion of Iraq in March 2003. His country, however, has a large number of troops serving in the multinational security coalition in Afghanistan.

According to the White House, after his visit to Germany, Bush is expected to travel to Slovakia, where he will meet with that country's leaders as well as with Russian President Vladimir Putin.

E-mail Charlie Coon at: coonc@mil.europe.osd.mil

B-1 Lancers back in air

ARLINGTON, Va. — The Air Force's B-1 Lancers are back in the air after being grounded when the front nose gear of a forward-deployed bomber collapsed on Dec. 30.

The aircraft "landed, it taxied [to its parking spot], it shut down the engines, and then it collapsed" when the front nose gear gave way, said spokesman 1st Lt. Ryan Fitzgerald, who is with the Air Combat Command at Langley Air Force Base, Va.

No one was hurt in the incident, Fitzgerald said. Fitzgerald said the Air Force would not publicly release the reason for the collapse until the Air Force's Accident Investigation Board completes its report, a process that takes "several months."

Chaplain Yee honorably discharged

WASHINGTON — U.S. Army Chaplain James Yee, who was imprisoned for more than two months on treason charges that eventually were dropped, received an honorable discharge on Friday, his lawyers said.

Attorney Eugene Fidell said in a statement the discharge was scheduled for midnight Friday.

"As a West Point graduate, he leaves the Army with great sadness," he said. "The fact that he was imprisoned for a prolonged period for no valid reason remains indefensible."

"He and his family are very grateful for the outpouring of public support they have received from around the world."

Yee, a Chinese-American and Muslim chaplain, was ministering at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, when he was arrested in September 2003 for allegedly attempting to pass prisoner information and U.S. secrets to al-Qaida.

All charges were officially dropped in March 2004. Army officials have not released additional details on why Yee was imprisoned.

In November, the Council on American-Islamic Relations presented Yee with its Courage and Inspiration Award for his patience and faith during his imprisonment.

Fidell said Yee and his family asked for privacy, but that "he looks forward in due course to expressing his views about his experience."

From staff reports



BEN MURRAY/Stars and Stripes

Georgiana Ayer, right, presents the clothing she received from retailer Land's End to Chaplain (Col.) Eric Holmstrom at the Landstuhl Regional Medical Center on Friday, while her husband, Maj. Philip Ayer unloads more boxes of donated gifts.

Donations to Landstuhl almost through the roof

Surge brings piles of clothes and books to hospital

BY BEN MURRAY
Stars and Stripes

LANDSTUHL, Germany — Signaling the unprecedented amount of gifts for U.S. servicemembers that have inundated military hospitals in the United States and Europe, chaplains at the Army's main hospital in Germany spend their workday literally tripping over donations.

Boxes of movies, books, socks, snacks and letters line the hallways and spill into the chaplains' offices, where they talk almost matter-of-factly about a recent donation of 600 jackets, or another of 2,000 sweat suits.

"Quantity-wise, yeah, it's been a big surge and a big push," said Landstuhl Chaplain (Col.) Eric Holmstrom, who manages most of the incoming donations for servicemembers being treated at the hospital. "We're in the process of looking for more warehouse space."

Holmstrom's office is straining under the weight of the same kind of generosity that last week prompted major military hospitals in the United States to ask people to stop sending gifts for a while, saying they had months' worth of donations to give out and no room to store any more.

Holmstrom said Thursday that Landstuhl has come close to reaching that point, but the chaplains decided not to put a block on incoming gifts for servicemembers.

"I raised that issue and our decision was, 'We

don't want to say no,'" Holmstrom said, though he then added quickly, "That's not an appeal for more planeloads or pallets of things."

Even amid the urgent need for money and relief needed by victims of the tsunami disaster in South Asia, people in early January have continued to heap more onto the Landstuhl pile, Holmstrom said.

One such person is Georgiana Ayer, co-leader of an Army family readiness group in Mannheim, Germany, who showed up at the hospital Friday with several large boxes of new clothing from retailer Land's End.

Ayer's story is similar to the thousands of others that have combined to create the logjam of boxes at Landstuhl. After hearing in November that the hospital needed clothes for patients, she pooled some money to buy a few things, and started one that snowballed into a donation from the Land's End clothing company that included sweat shirts and sweat pants, coats, hats and boots, among other items.

"I wasn't expecting anything big," Ayer said. "But I came into the office one day and someone said, 'Oh, we got four giant boxes,'" she said.

Holmstrom said cash donations to the chaplains' office are the easiest thing for the staff to handle these days, though the hospital will take other gifts. Anything extra that doesn't get used at the hospital will eventually find a grateful servicemember somewhere, possibly in Iraq, he said.

"If it's not used here, it goes downrange," he said.

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Firefighters to get two days of real-life training at Sigonella

BY SANDRA JONTZ
Stars and Stripes

Ain't nothing like the real thing. That's why U.S. contract firefighters from Bagram Air Base in Afghanistan and K2 Air Base in Uzbekistan will spend two days next week on an aircraft, training to extinguish fires.

In March, the Naval Air Station Sigonella, Sicily, received a Mobile Aircraft Firefighting Training Device, in which trainers can set all or parts of the aircraft ablaze with propane gas-fed flames and smoke up the cockpit and cabin.

While not a real airliner, it's an aircraft nonetheless that "allows firefighters to see a three-dimensional fire and fight an actual fire rather than a simulated one," said Sean Edwards, Naval Air Station Sigonella's assistant fire chief.

"They can feel the fire, feel heat, and know what it's like to fight a blaze in (the body of) an aircraft." When stored, the device folds up to look like an 18-wheeler trailer. But when unfolded, it resembles a small-framed aircraft that Edwards likened to a 737 or a C-9.

Built on a 45-foot-long trailer, the training plane is

a fuselage with wings, a tail and three engines on which firefighters can ignite a variety of controlled fires, meant to engulf just the wheels, the cockpit, the engine or the galley. The trailer contains the control box that operates the fires and smoke machine via a propane hose and electrical connections.

Because the fire is controlled, it can immediately be extinguished. Cameras throughout allow controllers to keep an eye on firefighters inside battling flames in temperatures that can reach 1,400 degrees. The plane can be set afire repeatedly without damaging it.

A few months ago, NAS Sigonella began training firefighters from other overseas areas, mainly those in the Southwest Asia bases, Edwards said. On Tuesday, the 12 firefighters from bases in Afghanistan and Uzbekistan will begin the two-day course in Sigonella.

While Sigonella can accommodate up to 30 students per class, the contract firefighters train on a rotating basis so that too many aren't away from their home base at the same time, Edwards said.

"Usually, they can't afford to send a ton at a time because of manpower reasons," he said.

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Courtesy of the U.S. Navy

Firefighters enter the fuselage of a Mobile Aircraft Firefighting Training Device at Naval Air Station Sigonella, Sicily. The training aircraft allows controllers to set all or parts of the aircraft ablaze with propane gas-fed flames and to smoke up the cockpit and cabin.

Defense Department still awaiting word on 'concurrent receipt'

Defense officials, as of Thursday, were still awaiting word from the White House's Office of Management and Budget on whether to pay accelerated Concurrent Retirement and Disability Pay (CRDP) to 28,000 retirees rated "unemployable" by the Department of Veterans Affairs.

For decades, military retirees who accepted VA disability compensation have seen taxable retired pay reduced by a matching amount. Congress, in recent years, began to relax this ban on "concur-

MILITARY UPDATE

Tom Philpott

receipt" for retirees who served full careers and had combat-related injuries or severe disabilities.

In December 2003, lawmakers approved

a 10-year, phase-in plan of full retired pay, in the form of CRDP, for those with disabilities of 50 percent or more. Last October, lawmakers voted to accelerate the schedule for 100-percent disabled, fully restoring their retired pay effective Jan. 1.

Since then, the Bush administration has been studying whether accelerated CRDP must be paid to retirees with disabilities rated below 100 percent if they draw VA compensation at the 100 percent level because their wounds or ailments are so seri-

ous they are deemed unemployable.

Pentagon lawyers believe they must be included. But Defense officials awaited a final OK from OMB before making an announcement and ordering finance centers to increase CRDP sharply for 28,000 retirees. The higher payments, if and when they begin, will be retroactive to Jan. 1, 2005.

To comment, write Military Update, P.O. Box 1111, Centerville, VA 20106-1111; e-mail mlupdate@aol.com or visit www.militaryupdate.com

Roadside bomb kills 7 soldiers riding in Bradley

Two Marines killed in separate incidents on deadly day for military

BY NICK WADHAMS
The Associated Press

BAGHDAD — A roadside bomb killed seven U.S. soldiers in northwest Baghdad and two Marines were killed in western Iraq on Thursday, the deadliest day for American forces since a suicide attack on a U.S. base last month.

The soldiers with Task Force Baghdad were on patrol Thursday evening when their Bradley fighting vehicle hit the explosive, the military said in a statement. Everyone inside the Bradley was killed.

The two Marines killed in action Thursday were members of the 1st Marine Expeditionary Force and lost their lives in Anbar province, which is home to the volatile city of Fallujah.

On Friday, a top U.S. military official raised fears that insurgents may try to carry out "spectacular" attacks as the Iraqi election draws near, while Sunni religious leaders called for unity but

persisted in their demands that the vote be delayed.

The comments by Air Force Brig. Gen. Erv Lessel echoed a warning by Iraq's prime minister the day before that insurgent violence would only increase ahead of the Jan. 30 election for a National Assembly.

Hours after Ayad Allawi spoke, the roadside bomb killed seven U.S. soldiers in northwest Baghdad on Thursday.

A state of emergency, originally announced two months ago, also was extended Thursday for 30 days throughout the country except for the northern Kurdish-run areas. The decree includes a nighttime curfew and gives the government additional power to make arrests and launch military or police operations.

Lessel, deputy chief of staff for strategic communications, said the United States has no intelligence indicating specific plans for a major attack but it is a concern. He said the insurgents' biggest weapon was their ability to instill fear.



JEFFREY A. WOLFE/Courtesy of the U.S. Air Force

A Bradley fighting vehicle crushes a monument to Saddam Hussein on the streets of Al Hawjah on Dec. 3, 2003. Seven members of Task Force Baghdad were killed while on patrol when their Bradley fighting vehicle hit a roadside bomb Thursday evening.

"I think a worst case is where they have a series of horrific attacks that cause mass casualties in some spectacular fashion in the days leading up to the elections," Lessel said. "If you look over the last six months they have steadily escalated the barbaric nature of the attacks they have been committing. A year ago you didn't see these kinds of horrific things."

President Bush was optimistic Friday, saying the elections will be "a credibly hopeful experience," despite rising violence and doubts that the vote will bring stability and democracy.

"I know it's hard but it's hard for a reason," Bush told reporters in the Oval Office, saying that a small number of insurgents are

trying to impede the elections because they fear freedom. "This is a big moment for the Iraqi people."

In the village of Naimiyah, hundreds of refugees from the destroyed nearby city of Fallujah demonstrated after Friday's prayers demanding that U.S. and Iraqi forces leave the city, open all the roads for residents to go back and pay compensation for damaged property.

The previous four days had seen a string of assassinations, suicide car bombings and other assaults that killed 90 people.

But Thursday's toll was the highest for the U.S. military in Iraq since a suicide bombing at a mess tent in Mosul on Dec. 21

killed 22 people, including 14 U.S. soldiers and three American contractors.

Allawi said he expected the number of attacks would rise before the Jan. 30 vote and called the decision on prolonging the state of emergency a precaution. He blamed former members of Saddam Hussein's Sunni-dominated regime for the continuing violence.

"Saddam's followers, who have intensely shed the blood of our people and army, are still in action clandestinely, allying with a bunch of criminals, murderers and terrorists who are the enemies of our people and our progress," Allawi said Thursday during a ceremony to mark the national Army Day holiday.

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Official: Army may extend tours of duty for reservists

BY ROBERT BURNS
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Stretched thin by the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, the U.S. Army is considering a National Guard and Reserve policy shift that could result in part-timers being called to active-duty multiple times for up to two years each time, a senior Army official said.

The official, who discussed the matter with a small group of reporters on condition of anonymity because the matter has not been fully settled inside the Pentagon, said Thursday the Army probably will ask Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld in the next several months to change the policy.

The official also said it appeared likely that the Army will ask Congress to permanently increase the statutory size of the Army by 30,000 soldiers, to 512,000. He said that decision would be made next year.

The Army has the authority to add 30,000 soldiers, but arranged for it to be only a temporary boost because it did not want a long-term commitment to the cost of a larger force. But now it appears that the Army has no choice but to accept a permanent increase, the official said.

The Army estimates that a permanent increase of 30,000 soldiers will cost it about \$3 billion a year.

One reason that the National Guard and Reserve have been used so heavily over the past three years is that the active-duty Army is too small to meet the demands of war — particularly in Iraq, where troop levels have far exceeded original predictions — while also maintaining a presence in traditional areas of influence such as Europe and the Korean peninsula.

The Army now has about 660,000 troops on active duty, of which about 160,000 are members of the Guard and Reserve.

The Army wants them to be eligible for an unlimited number of call-ups, so long as no single mobilization lasts more than 24 months, the official said.

Under current policy set by Rumsfeld, a Guard or Reserve member is not to serve on active duty for more than 24 total months. Thus, for example, if a Guard or Reserve member was mobilized for six months after the attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, and later for six months in Afghanistan, then that person is off limits for duty in Iraq because a yearlong tour there would exceed the 24-month limit.



CAPT. GABRIELLA COOK VIA LAS VEGAS REVIEW-JOURNAL/AP

A police dog stands between U.S. Army Cpl. Manny Torres, left, and an unidentified Iraqi security officer in Baghdad. Capt. Gabriella Cook of the U.S. Army Reserve's 313th Military Police Detachment, is seeking food donations for Iraq's starving police dogs.

U.S. soldier starts food drive for Iraqi canines

BY KEN RITTER

The Associated Press

LAS VEGAS — Just before the New Year, U.S. Army Reserve Capt. Gabriella Cook sent an urgent e-mail from Iraq requesting food shipments. Not for her or her unit — for Iraqi police dogs.

"The dogs are starving and urgently need dry dog food," Cook wrote in a Dec. 28 e-mail that said the Iraqi Interior Ministry's only bomb-sniffing police dogs were eating table scraps and garbage.

The response to the canine crisis has been overwhelming: Offers of help poured in from New Hampshire, Florida, Texas, Ohio and New York. One sports gambling handicapper alone ponied up \$5,000.

The Las Vegas Valley Humane Society is now trying to find a way to ship pallets of dry dog food to Iraq to feed the 12 undernourished German shepherds and one black Labrador retriever at the Iraqi Police Academy.

The Nevada effort appeared to

be unique, said Stephanie Shain, spokeswoman for the Humane Society of the United States in Washington. She said the national organization was contacting officials on Capitol Hill about Cook's account.

The appeal to help feed the Iraqi dogs also has a human benefit.

After all, having healthy Iraqi bomb-sniffing dogs translates into safer U.S. troops.

"If one dog smells one bomb and saves a platoon's life, it's worth it," said Terry Muratore, a veterinarian who looks after Cook's pets.

Muratore said his telephone started ringing with offers of help after he was first quoted by the Las Vegas Review-Journal about Cook's request to "please send all the dog food you can."

In Baghdad, military spokesman Staff Sgt. Don Dees said the care of Iraqi police dogs was separate from U.S. military working dogs, which he said were well-fed.

Raids nab 43 suspected insurgents in Babil

Soldiers and Marines arrested 43 suspected insurgents in Babil province, Iraq, during a series of raids last weekend, according to a news release from the U.S. Central Command.

The arrests were part of Operation River Walk, a 36-hour cordon-and-search operation focused on Latifiyah, a city along the Euphrates River, the release said. It is part of a larger effort to tame a dangerous region south of Baghdad that has become a haven for insurgents who fled from Fallujah after coalition forces captured the city in November.

Operation River Walk involved soldiers from the 1st Cavalry Division's 2nd Battalion, 12th Cavalry Regiment as well as Marines from the 2nd Battalion, 24th Marine Expeditionary Unit.

Besides the arrests, the troops also discovered nine significant weapons caches and destroyed several homemade bombs, the release said.

From staff reports

Retired general called up to review Iraq policy

Stars and Stripes

The Pentagon is sending a retired four-star Army general to Iraq next week to conduct an unusual "open-ended" review of the military's entire Iraq policy, including troop levels, training programs for Iraqi security forces and the strategy for fighting the insurgency, senior Defense Department officials told The New York Times on Thursday.

At a meeting Thursday with his top military and civilian aides, Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld instructed that Gen. Gary E.

Luck look at all areas of the operation, identify any weaknesses and report back in a few weeks with a confidential assessment, senior defense officials told the Times.

Luck is the former head of American forces in South Korea and currently a senior adviser to the military's Joint Forces Command. A senior adviser to Gen. Tommy Franks at his war-time headquarters in Qatar during the Iraq campaign in 2003 and knows the operation in Iraq well, Luck will lead a small team of military specialists, the Times reported in its Friday editions.

A principal focus will be to address one of the biggest problems facing the military in Iraq today: how to train Iraqi soldiers and police officers to replace the American troops now securing the country.

Commanders have expressed disappointment in the performance of many of the Iraqi forces.

Top Pentagon spokesman Lawrence D. Rika said Luck's assignment was welcomed by Gen. John Abizaid and Gen. George W. Casey Jr., the two top commanders in the region, the paper reported.

Jury selection final for alleged Abu Ghraib abuse ringleader

BY T.A. BADGER

The Associated Press

PORT HOOD, Texas — A 10-man jury was seated Friday for the military trial of the soldier prosecutors call the ringleader of the prisoner abuse at the Abu Ghraib prison.

Opening statements begin Monday in the court-martial of Spc. Charles Graner, of Uniontown, Pa., the first soldier to be tried in the case.

The jury is made up of four officers and six enlisted men. Two prospective jurors were removed from the panel. Seven jurors must vote guilty for Graner to be convicted on charges that include conspiracy to maltreat Iraqi detainees, assault and declaration of duty.

Col. Allen Batschelet was dismissed after he told the judge, Col. James Pohl, that he was embarrassed as an Army officer after seeing the photos. Batschelet admitted that he had strong views regarding Graner's role in the abuse scandal and that he could not set those views aside as a juror. Lt. Col. Mark Kormos was struck from the panel by prosecutors, with no reason given.

A list of potential witnesses also was made public during the jury selection.

Among them were the four other soldiers who

have reached plea deals after being charged with Abu Ghraib abuses: Pvt. Ivan Frederick, Spc. Megan Ambuhl, Spc. Jeremy Svits and Spc. Armin Cruz. Frederick, Ambuhl and Svits were guards at Abu Ghraib, while Cruz was part of a military intelligence unit.

Three other soldiers from the Maryland-based 372nd Military Police Company also face charges in the case.

Among them is Pfc. Lynndee England, who gave birth in October to a child that Army prosecutors claim was fathered by Graner. Charges against her have not yet been formally filed, said Capt. Steven Neill, a spokesman for the prosecution.

On Thursday, prosecutors dropped charges of obstruction of justice, adultery, and two of four assault charges Graner faced.

Neill would not say why they were dropped, only that it was usually done for evidentiary issues or strategic reasons.

Guy Womack, Graner's attorney, said he thinks the charges were dropped because his client was wrongly accused of those counts.

Graner, 36, faces up to 17½ years in a military prison on charges of conspiracy to maltreat detainees, assault and committing indecent acts. He had faced up to 24½ years before the other charges were dropped.

Closing arguments end in case of GI charged in alleged grooming of Iraqi

BY ANGELA K. BROWN

The Associated Press

PORT HOOD, Texas — An Army sergeant was within his rights as a platoon leader when he ordered his troops to force two Iraqi cousins into the Tigris River for violating curfew, his attorney said in closing arguments.

Army Sgt. 1st Class Tracy Perkins, accused in the alleged drowning death of Zaidoun Fadel Hassoun, 19, is charged with involuntary manslaughter, aggravated assault, obstruction of justice and making a false statement.

Jurors deliberated for four hours Thursday and resumed Friday morning. If convicted, Perkins could receive no punishment or up to 26 years in a military prison.

Defense attorney Capt. Josh Norris said the hostilities in Iraq require soldiers to find effective nonlethal ways to deter crime and establish respect.

"Did these guys cross over the line? Did they know the left and right limits? This war is in this gray area most of the time," Norris said. "Was it (the river incident) a good idea? I don't know ... but was it a crime, considering all the circumstances?"

Prosecutors say Zaidoun Hassoun drowned and his cousin, Marwan Hassoun, climbed out the river. But the defense denies that Zaidoun died. The trial of Army 1st Lt. Jack Saville, the platoon leader, was postponed until March after a judge ordered the

victim's body to be exhumed for an autopsy and identification.

In closing arguments, prosecutor Capt. Tom Schiffer said Perkins gave the orders to dump the men into the water — and therefore shares the blame with soldiers who forced the cousins at gunpoint into the river near Samarra in January 2004.

"We do need to send a message that the U.S. military is not a place to beat them and throw them into bodies of water for no military purpose," Schiffer said.

He said a soldier's testimony that Perkins ordered him to grab another Iraqi man in December 2003 near Balad and toss him into the river showed a pattern of using unlawful military force. Perkins faces a second assault charge in that incident.

Wide chasm divides Iraqis, military vote

Some local officials say fair elections are impossible but Marine commander says they are



JOSEPH GORDONO/Stars and Stripes

Baghdadi Mayor Nassan Amad, left, and Hit Mayor Ali Hamdi listen to Lt. Col. Gary Stevens, commander of the 1st Battalion, 23rd Marine Regiment, not shown, as he tells elections will go ahead as scheduled.

BY JOSEPH GORDONO

Stars and Stripes

A BAGHDADI, Iraq — American military commanders in restive Al Anbar Province are warning local leaders that elections will be held on schedule at the end of January, regardless of the security situation or some politicians' opposition to the process.

The region — commonly referred to as the Sunni Triangle, and the epicenter of insurgent attacks — is expected to be the most difficult in Iraq to secure in the run-up to the Jan. 30 election of a national assembly responsible for writing a new constitution.

On Wednesday, senior Marine Corps officials brought their message directly to the mayors of Hit and Baghdad, cities northwest of Fallujah that could be a flash point of violence in coming weeks.

"I know there is some opposition and reluctance to participating in the election," Lt. Col. Greg Stevens, commander of the 1st Battalion, 23rd Marine Regiment, told the mayors. "Again, I urge you, without participating there will be no voice for the people of Al Anbar. It's ultimately up to the people whether they choose to vote or not vote, but it is my responsibility to make sure they have that choice."

For their part, the local officials firmly believe the vote cannot happen as scheduled.

"In reality, we can only conclude it is impossible to hold elections in this area. If we take a contrary position, we are deceiving ourselves," said Nassan Amad, Baghdad mayor.

The wide chasm was reflected in the meeting: The two mayors sat on one side of the Baghdad mayor's office, separated from the Marines by 15 feet of green Persian carpet. In the middle stood a translator, alternately explaining each side's comments.

The first concern is security, Amad said. Each attack on election workers, each car bomb targeting Iraqi Police or National Guard, each kidnapping of a local citizen drives home that message, he said.

Additionally, said Hit Mayor Ali Hamdi, residents of Al Anbar will not vote because they have no local candidates on the ballot.

"There are four opinions of the election here: People will boycott the elections and urge others to do so, people will ignore the elections and not care; people will ask the elections be postponed; or people will threaten anyone who participates or cooperates in any way," Hamdi said.

U.S. military officials bristle at those notions, especially in the last case.

"Those who are threatening people need to be identified and arrested," Stevens said. "Or if they resist, they need to be killed."

The prospect of bringing the elections to Al Anbar province has many hurdles, including how to register Iraqis to vote. Even before the U.S. assault on Fallujah, members of the Independent Election Commission of Iraq said security concerns were keeping them from the area.

Now, with some 100,000 Fallujah and Ramadi residents displaced during the fighting, registration will be even more difficult. To address that, officials said, citizens in Al Anbar will be allowed to register on the day of the vote and can cast their ballot at any polling station in the province, regardless of their hometown.

"The elections are going to occur, and it's harsh to say, but

they will occur whether the mayors or the city councils participate in them or not," Stevens said. "I will continue with the process as long as there is one citizen who wants to vote."

Many of those displaced residents have moved to cities such as Hit and Baghdad, both of which lie on the Euphrates River. Over the past four months, U.S. military officials say, they have largely respected the local politicians' requests to keep troops out of Hit.

But with a string of attacks — including the bombing of a new city administration complex built with U.S. reconstruction funds — the U.S. military's "patience is at its end," Stevens said.

Stevens closed the meeting with a blunt warning to the local officials: Attacks on reconstruction projects and U.S. forces in Hit need to end, he said, or those projects will end and a decidedly more military attitude will be taken.

"I will make it clearly understood to the people that it was the insurgents who caused that to stop. If the insurgents continue their activities, we will fight them in the streets of Hit," Stevens told Hamdi.

The blame will not be on the multinational forces. It will be on the Iraqis who stand idly by and do nothing for the security of Al Anbar," Stevens told the officials. "There are no difficult races. Nothing good can happen without some measure of difficulty."

"Everything is a choice, and with choices come consequences, good or bad. The attacks need to stop, or there will be severe consequences."

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U.S. deaths in Iraq

The Associated Press

As of Thursday, at least 1,349 members of the U.S. military have died since the beginning of the Iraq war in March 2003, according to an Associated Press count. At least 1,054 died as a result of hostile action, the Defense Department said. The figures include three military civilians.

The AP count is nine higher than the Defense Department's tally, last updated at 10 a.m. Thursday.

The British military has reported 76 deaths; Italy, 19; Poland, 16; Spain, 11; Ukraine, nine; Bulgaria, seven; Slovakia, three; Estonia, Thailand and the Netherlands, two each; and Denmark, El Salvador, Hungary and Latvia one death each.

Since May 1, 2003, when President Bush declared that non-combat operations in Iraq had ended, 1,211 U.S. military members have died, according to AFS count. That includes at least 945 deaths resulting from hostile action, according to the military's numbers.

The latest death reported by the military:

■ Seven soldiers were killed by a roadside bomb in north-west Baghdad on Thursday.

■ Two Marines were killed Thursday in Iraq's Anbar province.

The latest identification reported by the Defense Department:

■ Army Pvt. Cory R. Dewey, 21, Beech Grove, Ind.; died Tuesday in Mosul, Iraq, when his vehicle was struck by a grenade, assigned to the 2nd Squadron, 14th Cavalry Regiment, 1st Brigade, 25th Infantry Division, Fort Leavenworth, Kan.

■ Army Sgt. 1st Class Otis J. McVey, 53, Oak Hill, W.Va.; died Nov. 7 in Beaver, W.Va., after being medically evacuated from Baghdad on Sept. 23 for treatment of a noncombat related illness; assigned to the Reserves 760th Transportation Company, Kenton, Ohio.

■ Army Sgt. Foster Pinkston, 47, Warrington, Ga.; died Sept. 16 in Eisenhower Army Medical Center in Augusta, Ga., from a noncombat related illness; assigned to the National Guard's 878th Engineer Battalion, Augusta, Ga.

IN THE WORLD

Indonesia raises death toll by 7,000

BY CHRIS BRUMMITT

The Associated Press

BANDA ACEH, Indonesia — U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan described the devastation on tsunami-battered Sumatra Island Friday as the worst he's ever seen, and authorities raised Indonesia's death toll by 7,000, bringing the overall total killed by the disaster to more than 147,000.

Twelve days after the tsunami hit, Annan and World Bank President James Wolfensohn flew over the island's west coast and later drove around the shattered coastal town of Meulaboh, where families picked through piles of rubble six feet high.

"I have never seen such utter destruction mile after mile," a shaken Annan told reporters. "You wonder where are the people? What has happened to them?"

Hardest hit was Sumatra, which was closest to the epicenter of the 9.0 magnitude quake, and where officials on Friday counted about 7,000 additional bodies — mostly in Meulaboh, which had been cut off by washed-out roads — increasing Indonesia's toll to 101,318.

India's death toll also rose to 10,001 Friday after officials reported recovery of 301 bodies in the isolated Andaman and Nicobar islands and nine others on India's southern coast.

That raised the overall death toll from the Dec. 26 earthquake and tsunami to 147,841.

British Foreign Secretary Jack Straw, who toured the Thai holiday destination of Phuket on Friday, also said that 391 missing Britons were likely dead. Forty-nine Britons have been confirmed dead.

He called the effort to identify thousands of bodies one of the biggest international forensic operations in history.

For more photos and stories on military relief operations, visit www.stripes.com

Indonesian military spokesman Ahmad Yani Basuki said the sharp increase was largely due to volunteers helping to recover bodies. "There was an incredible spike in the death toll," Basuki said. "A good deal of it was from Meulaboh."

With tens of thousands still missing and threatened by disease from the powerful waves that hit 11 nations, the United Nations said the death toll would keep climbing.

"I think we have to be aware that very many of the victims have been swept away and many, many will not reappear," U.N. humanitarian chief Jan Egeland said in New York. "The 150,000 dead figure is a very low figure. It will be much bigger."

Security concerns for foreign aid workers emerged. The South Korean government asked its aid workers, some of them affiliated with Christian groups, not to engage in religious activities that could provoke Islamic radicals.

Also, in an apparent sign that American relief agencies want to keep a lower profile, several trucks delivering supplies from U.S. AID removed large banners marking the source of the shipments.

Japan ordered nearly 900 troops to help with relief efforts, instructing ground and naval forces to leave next week for Indonesia and Thailand. Tokyo already has deployed three ships, 40 air force personnel and several teams of medical, rescue and forensic experts.



United States Navy helicopter crews begin another day of relief operations from the USS Abraham Lincoln off the western coast of the Indonesian province of Aceh. Relief operations continued for the province devastated by the Dec. 26 earthquake and tsunami wave.

Annan's visit came after he attended a summit of world leaders in Jakarta on Thursday on how to turn one of history's largest-ever aid packages — nearly \$4 billion in pledges — into food for the hungry and shelter for the homeless.

Secretary of State Colin Powell arrived in Sri Lanka, where more than 30,000 people died, to inspect tsunami-devastated areas in the south and hold talks on relief efforts.

"I had a chance to witness the

devastation firsthand, and only by seeing it on the ground can you really appreciate what it must have been like on that terrible day," he said.

While some areas in Thailand remained scenes of total devastation, other Thai resorts were looking to the future. Cleanup on several beaches was almost complete and tour operators were eager to get back to business.

In Indonesia, some aid officials were reviewing security precau-

tions after the arrival of some 80 members of a radical Islamic group. The group, Laskar Mujahidin, accused of taking part in Muslim-Christian fighting in another part of Indonesia between 1999 and 2001, has set up a relief camp — but said it was only there to help.

"We are not here to fight, we've come to help. We've got no problem with the foreigners as long as they have no hidden agenda," said group leader Salman Alfarizi.

U.S. to evaluate long-range relief efforts

LISA BURGESS

Stars and Stripes

ARLINGTON, Va. — With emergency aid to tsunami victims largely in place, U.S. commanders will spend the next several days planning their long-range goals, according to the leader of the military's relief effort.

"We are at a point, I believe, where we are able now to see the top of the crisis curve," Marine Lt. Gen. Robert R. Blackman told Pentagon reporters Friday.

Speaking by telephone from Utaapao, Thailand, where his Combined Support Force 536 is based, Blackman said that "the priority over the next 96 hours is to determine what our sustained requirements will be for this disaster relief on each of the three countries where we are focusing our efforts," — Thailand, Sri Lanka and Indonesia.

However, it is still too early to get a sense of how long it will take before the U.S. military can begin considering drawing back any of the personnel or capabilities tapped for the relief efforts, Blackman said.

"We will conduct operations here as long as it takes in order to accomplish our mission of minimizing further loss of life and mitigating human suffering," Blackwell said. "We will not stay any longer than necessary."

Now the U.S. military's job is to figure out how best to support the countries most hard-hit by the Dec. 26 earthquake and subsequent tsunamis in the long term, Blackman said.

"The challenge now that we're able to better see the top of the curve," Blackman said, "is to match up our existing capabilities here in each of these unique locations."

Only once the individual nations, the United Nations, and international aid agencies "are in a position to sustain the necessary relief" will Blackman make the recommendation that we begin to incrementally reduce our "military" capabilities in the effort. And that timetable, Blackman said, "will be different in each [country] of Thailand, Indonesia and Sri Lanka."

U.S. forces can expect to be involved in the tsunami relief efforts "for some time," Blackman said.

For example, the USNS Mercy hospital ship, which was dispatched to the region earlier this week, will not even arrive on-station for another 30 days, Blackwell confirmed.

With more than 13,000 U.S. military personnel now in the region and working to relieve devastation and human suffering on a "truly historic... scale," U.S. military commanders are offering these servicemen's mental health counseling, and that "earlier, rather than later," Blackman said.

E-mail Lisa Burgess at: burgessl@stripes.osd.mil

Saudis raise \$84M in telephone

RIYADH, Saudi Arabia — School children donated pocket money and King Fahd gave millions as Saudis raised \$84 million for the tsunami victims in a state-organized telethon that ended Friday.

The donation drive came as the oil-rich kingdom fended off accusations that it was not doing enough for the South Asian disaster, which has killed more than 147,000 people.

Many offer to adopt Asian orphans

BERLIN — Adoption expert Maria Holz usually gets two or three e-mails a day asking about children in need abroad. Since the Asian tsunami, it's been 10 times that.

She respects people's urge to help children who have lost their parents in the disaster but warns it's too early to know which children truly lack people who can raise them in their home country.

Donations can be claimed on 2004 taxes

WASHINGTON — Taxpayers making donations this month to aid the victims of the Indian Ocean tsunami will be able to claim deductions on their 2004 tax returns under legislation passed by Congress Thursday.

The bill sent to President Bush was aimed at encouraging private donations to the tsunami relief effort. Under current law, taxpayers would have had to wait until next year to claim a tax deduction for contributions made in January this year.

It passed both the House and Senate by voice vote.

From The Associated Press

Getting relief to victims

USAID teams help military to deliver tsunami aid

By FRED ZIMMERMAN

Stars and Stripes

UTAPAO, Thailand — With the United States pledging more than \$350 million to tsunami relief efforts, various organizations are on the ground here to ensure the aid gets to where it needs to be.

To help in that effort, the U.S. Agency for International Development's

Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance has embedded personnel with the U.S. military here.

Much like the military, OFDA has teams that assess damage and situations when disasters strike anywhere in the world, according to Roberta Rossi, USAID spokeswoman. The teams help coordinate relief operations with nongovernment agencies, the military and international agencies. There currently are about 40 team members on the ground in the region, each a specialist in a certain field — water and sanitation, for example.

As of Thursday, OFDA had committed more than \$36 million in humanitarian assistance, according to its Web site, www.usaid.gov. Everything from water and sanitation to health care and shelter are being provided by OFDA in certain regions of South Asia.

Rossi said the organization has warehouses located throughout the world stockpiled with relief supplies just waiting to be used. Having those supplies pre-positioned helped OFDA get them here quickly. The most urgent supplies needed in most areas, she said, are plastic sheeting for shelter and water filtration systems.

Getting the relief out is where the U.S. military comes in. Rossi said OFDA is getting the supplies to the region, and the military is using C-130s to fly the aid to distribution locations.

Often one of the first aid organizations on the ground, OFDA resembles one of the U.S. military services, according to Ken Issacs, OFDA director.

"OFDA could be compared to the Marine Corps," Issacs said. "We're often the first to respond to disaster and crises around the

world."

A close working relationship between OFDA and the military is typical during humanitarian relief operations, said Army Col. Doug Wallace, a civil affairs officer currently with Combined Support Force 536. While OFDA can bring expertise and supplies to the table, the U.S. military has "depth of staff, and planning, logistical and communications capabilities" to offer, Wallace said.

"We don't have the logistics or manpower capacity, but we have the expertise," Issacs said.

Wallace said that just three weeks prior to the tsunamis, members of OFDA briefed Pacific Command headquarters on how the organization operates. Now, he said, that recent information-sharing has made operations here between the two run smoother.

While it's not clear how long support will be needed here, Issacs said OFDA is prepared for the long haul.

"We're still assessing what the needs are, and we're going to act appropriately to those needs," he said.

E-mail Fred Zimmerman at: zimmf@pstrips.osd.mil



Issacs



JIM SCHWARTZ/Stars and Stripes

Workers in the Colombo, Sri Lanka, airport Friday process aid supplies sent from countries around the world. Personnel from the Disaster Resource Network, an alliance of global companies that mobilizes when disaster strikes, are helping U.S. Marines at the airport organize and move incoming relief aid to avoid a backlog of supplies.

Private outfits develop teams to transport aid

By JULIANA GITTLER

Stars and Stripes

COLOMBO, Sri Lanka — As U.S. military forces plug ahead with a relief plan in tsunami-ravaged Sri Lanka, a collaboration of private companies set up after another devastating natural disaster is helping ensure tons of aid relief is moving in and out of the main airport smoothly.

After a deadly earthquake on Dec. 26, 2003, in Bam, Iran, shipping giant DHL began transporting planes of aid to the local airport there. Supplies quickly backed up.

"We decided to put a team together instead of donating more planes and adding to the chaos," said Chris Weeks, a DHL employee who heads the Airport Emergency Team set up at the Colombo airport. "We decided to put this together."

DHL and several other companies from around the world formed the Disaster Resource Network, an organization that would, in times of crisis, move in and help with logistics, transportation and communications. In Sri Lanka, the Airport Emergency Team coordinates and processes tons of incoming supplies.

As aid arrives, a team of 12 assisted by local workers moves it, organizes it, processes it and sends it out on military and civilian aircraft, Weeks said.

The system utilizes the business practices of its member companies and brings in skilled laborers such as forklift operators. It's safer and more efficient than disaster relief operations of the past, Weeks said. The key, he adds, is arriving quickly, before operations can back up.

"We couldn't have reacted as quickly as we did (without the

team already in place)," Weeks said. "You have to get there within three days. We got here just in the nick of time."

In the first week, the team moved 2,600 tons of aid from 47 countries. Much of it goes out in U.S. Air Force Pave Hawk helicopters and Canadian and American military cargo planes, while some is transported by Sri Lankan government agencies and nongovernmental agencies, Weeks said.

U.S. Marines conducting logistics and airport control operations at the airport, from the Combined Logistics Control Center, assist the Airport Emergency Team with lifting, among other tasks, as they wait for their full-scale relief operations to begin.

"We help them in any way that we can," said Staff Sgt. Claude Pile of the Landing Support Company of the 3rd Transportation Support Battalion in Okinawa and staff noncommissioned officer for the control center.

Week's team now is sending representatives to countries in the disaster areas where supplies have backed up, such as in Indonesia, to help assist operations there.

They also have begun adding better processing technology using wireless Internet connections so as a plane lands, someone can record arrival information and transmit it throughout the airport warehouse and back to the company or country the plane came from.

The team has seen some logistical obstacles, but most of the relief is at least flowing out, Weeks said.

"We're giving it a fighting chance to get out there," he said.

E-mail Juliana Gittler at: gittlerj@pstrips.osd.mil

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Train collision in northern Italy kills 14

By PAOLO FERRARI

The Associated Press

BOLOGNINA DI CREVALCORE, Italy — A passenger train and a freight train collided in thick fog Friday in northern Italy, killing 14 people and injuring dozens, rescue officials said.

The crash, on a line between Bologna and Verona, left several train cars in a wreck of buckled metal. At least one carriage was lifted high into the air by the force of the collision.

The crash happened at 12:50 p.m. in a rural area of Bolognina di Crevalcore, 25 miles north of Bologna.

Workers pulled bodies from the wreckage and laid them in body bags in a misty field.

Eight bodies had been recovered, according to police in the nearby town of San Giovanni in Persiceto, who were overseeing the efforts.



SOURCE: ESRI AP

Rescue officials in Rome said

14 people were killed and 80 injured, several seriously.

The Civil Defense department said around 100 people were on board the passenger train, which was a local train traveling south from Verona to Bologna.

The freighter was headed north from Rome to San Zeno Falzano. The cause of the crash was not known, but officials said there was thick fog at the time of the collision. The Transport Ministry said it was opening an investigation.

A helicopter was sent from Rome, the ANSA news agency reported, while several ambulances rushed to the scene.

Several seriously injured people were taken to a hospital in Bologna, and about 50 people were being treated on-site for minor injuries, the report said.



Firefighters work on the wreckage of a passenger train that collided with a freight train in Bolognina di Crevalcore, Italy, on Friday.

10 alleged Mexican gang members sentenced in killings of 12 women

By MARINA MONTEMAYOR

The Associated Press

CIUDAD JUAREZ, Mexico — Ten alleged gang members were convicted in the killings of 12 women, some of the hundreds who have been found slain in this border city in recent years.

Four bus drivers, all thought to be loyal to a criminal gang known

as "Los Toltecas," were sentenced Thursday to between 40 and 113 years in prison for premeditated homicide, aggravated rape and criminal association in the slayings of six Ciudad Juarez women.

In a verdict delivered by a different judge, six members of another gang, "Los Rebeldes," received between 24 and 40 years in prison for similar convictions in the deaths of

six other women, said Rene Medrano, a spokesman for the state attorney general's office in Chihuahua, which includes Juarez.

The Los Toltecas members were arrested in 1999, after the reputed leader of their group, Jesus Manuel Guardado, alias "El Tolteca," was identified by a 14-year-old girl as the man who sexually assaulted and tried to kill her.



An Indian paramilitary soldier jumps out of the window of an income tax office building Friday after it was attacked and set ablaze by suspected militants in Srinagar, India.

4 killed in militant attack on Kashmir government office

The Associated Press

SRINAGAR, India — Militants stormed a government building in Indian-controlled Kashmir on Friday, setting it on fire with about 70 employees trapped inside, police said.

At least four people, including two attackers, were killed. Three militants made their way into the building housing the income tax office in Srinagar, the summer capital of Jammu-Kashmir state, hurling a hand grenade that began the blaze, a police officer said on condition of anonymity.

A soldier, a civilian and two militants were killed, said K. Srinivasan, a senior officer of the paramilitary Border Security Force. Four soldiers were wounded.

Paramilitary soldiers surrounded the burning building and

helped evacuate most of the civilians inside, he said. TV footage showed a stream of shaken employees clambering down from the second floor on ladders set up by rescue crews.

One of the employees evacuated, identified as Noor-u-din, said two co-workers were still missing, Srinivasan said.

Militants holed up inside the building kept firing at soldiers outside, he said. Firefighters managed to extinguish the flames, which gutted the building's third floor, paramilitary spokesman Manoj Kumar said.

The three-hour ordeal ended when the paramilitary troops stormed the building, searching through the rubble for the militants and any other survivors. Several explosions went off while they were inside.

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IN THE STATES

CIA report blames Tenet, Pavitt for pre-9/11 failings

BY GREG MILLER
Los Angeles Times

WASHINGTON — A classified internal CIA investigation singles out former CIA director George J. Tenet and the former head of the agency's clandestine service for failing to devote adequate resources to fighting the terrorist threat before the Sept. 11 attacks, according to intelligence officials who have read the report.

The report by the CIA's Inspector General's Office lays significant blame at the feet of Tenet but goes farther in its criticism of James L. Pavitt, the former deputy director of operations, recommending that the agency convene a special panel to determine whether Pavitt should be sanctioned.

The report and its recommendations represent the first time that the CIA has moved to hold any of its employees or senior officers accountable for failures surrounding the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks.

Tenet and Pavitt both left the agency last summer. Pavitt and a spokesman for Tenet denounced the report and rejected its conclusions, saying the two intelligence officials had fought vigorously throughout their tenures to secure more resources to fighting terrorism.

On Dec. 14, President Bush

awarded Tenet the Presidential Medal of Freedom, calling him "one of the first to recognize and address the growing threat to America from radical terrorist networks."

Tenet's spokesman, Bill Harlow, called the criticism of the former CIA director "absurd."

"No one in the U.S. government was more aggressive in calling attention to and dealing with the threat of terrorism prior to 9/11 than was George Tenet," Harlow said in an e-mail to the Los Angeles Times. "He is confident that a fair reading of his record during this period would show that senior CIA officials were the most aggressive, resourceful and committed U.S. combatants in the war on terror at the time."

Pavitt, in a telephone interview, called the report "offensive."

"The basic criticism is that it was a failure on my part and others to get appropriate resources to those parts of the organization that needed them," Pavitt said.



Tenet

"I don't think it is an accurate portrayal of what the facts were at the time," Pavitt said. "Claiming George and I or others didn't put resources in the right place — they can make the claim, make the charge and try to substantiate it. But the fact is nobody pled more forcefully for dollars than I did."

A CIA spokesman declined to comment on the report, which is still considered to be in draft form.

The investigation, by CIA Inspector General John Helgerson, was conducted in response to a request in December 2002 from a joint congressional inquiry that the CIA determine whether and to what extent its employees were at fault for a series of breakdowns in the months before the terrorist strikes.

While it had been expected that the Inspector General's report might identify low-level employees who had failed to pass on critical information, few anticipated that it would be so aggressive in assigning blame to the CIA's senior ranks. It is not clear what evidence the report cited to support its criticisms of Tenet and Pavitt, but both men have been the targets of similar criticism in external probes conducted by Congress and by the independent bipartisan commission that investigated the Sept. 11 attacks.

Klan member pleads not guilty in '64 Miss. civil rights slayings

BY SHELIA BYRD
The Associated Press

PHILADELPHIA, Miss. — Reputed Ku Klux Klan member Edgar Ray Killen responded loudly with "not guilty" three times Friday as he was arraigned on murder charges in the slayings of three civil rights workers more than 40 years ago.

Killen, handcuffed and dressed in a loosely fitting orange jail jumpsuit, lowered his voice when asked if he could afford an attorney. He was then led off to the Neshoba County Jail pending another hearing Wednesday. He was ordered held without bond until Jan. 11.

Killen, 79, was arrested Thursday in the 1964 shooting deaths of James Chaney, a 21-year-old black Mississippi, and two white New Yorkers, Andrew Goodman, 20, and Michael Schwerner, 24. It was the first time the state has sought criminal charges in the case that outraged a nation.

At the hearing, the suspect told Circuit Judge Marcus Gordon he couldn't afford a lawyer but did own some land. Gordon said he would decide later whether he would appoint an attorney.

Soon after Killen's arraignment, the courthouse was

cleared by authorities who said they had received a bomb threat. Nothing suspicious was found, they said later.

Rep. John Lewis, the black Georgia congressman who knew the three slain men, hailed the arrest Friday, telling NBC's "Today" that it was "a tremendous step down a very long road."

In 1967, the Justice Department tried Killen and other men — many of them also Klan members — on federal civil rights

violations. Seven were convicted and sentenced to prison terms ranging from three to 10 years. Killen was freed after his trial ended in a hung jury.

Sheriff Larry Myers said Friday that the Killen indictment was the only one he had received related to the Chaney, Goodman and Schwerner slayings. He said any information about possible additional indictments in the case would have to come from prosecutors, who have declined to comment.



Killen



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Chemicals leak from the tanks of a derailed train in Graniteville, S.C., on Thursday. A Norfolk Southern freight train carrying chlorine gas struck a parked train early Thursday, killing two people and injuring at least 180 others, authorities said.

Toxic gas from train wreck kills 8

The Associated Press

GRANITEVILLE, S.C. — The air in Graniteville remained too dangerous for people to breathe Friday morning, 24 hours after a Norfolk Southern train carrying chlorine gas crashed into a parked train near an Avondale Mills Inc. plant.

About 75 people found shelter at the University of South Carolina-Aiken on Thursday night, and shelter operators said the displaced residents were planning for a three-day stay.

More than 240 people sought treatment for respiratory and other ailments, and authorities said late Thursday that about 45 were admitted to hospitals.

Five victims, all men, were found at a mill near the wreck.

Another man died in a vehicle, and one died in his home. The engineer of the moving train died at a hospital.

Autopsies were planned, but authorities said all appeared to die from inhaling the chlorine gas.

The wreck is the second in two months in the small textile mill town near the Georgia state line. In November, five people were killed when their car was hit by a train at a rail crossing.

The toxic gas kept investigators from reaching the site and officials don't know how the two trains ended up on the same track, National Transportation Safety Board spokesman Keith Holloway said.

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Bush meets with tax reform panel

Asks senators to simplify code and encourage growth

By JENNIFER LOVEN
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Bush on Friday called streamlining and reforming the U.S. tax code an "essential task for our country," but offered few hints of how he intends to get it done.

Treasury Secretary John Snow said "everything's on the table," including possibly the popular home mortgage and charitable deductions and a former senator leading a tax-reform panel for Bush said that a national sales tax or flat tax also could be in the cards.

"I am firm in my desire to get something done," Bush said at the end of a White House meeting with former Sen. Connie Mack, R-Fla., and John Breaux, D-La., the leaders of a nine-member panel the president appointed Friday to recommend reforms to the tax code.

"A simple code will make it easier on the taxpayers," Bush said. "But it's an important task in order to make sure the economic growth we are seeing in the United States continues forward. ... It seems like to me the tax code today discourages economic vitality and growth when you spend billions of hours filling out the forms."

Snow, talking to reporters later outside the White House, said the panel has been ordered "to take a hard look at everything."

Asked if that includes the home-mortgage and charitable deductions that millions of Americans use to reduce their federal tax liabilities, Snow gave no solid assurance that either would be kept. He merely noted that the panel has been told to "give due consideration to the importance of charitable deduction and the home mortgage deduction."

The key question facing the panel is whether to accomplish reforms through changes to the existing tax code, or by scrapping it and moving to either a flat-tax or national sales tax system.

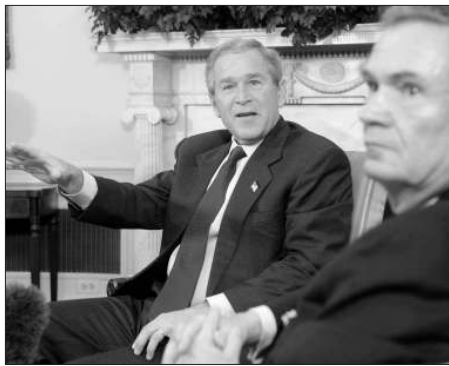
"I think it could be addressed in any of those," Mack said.

Mack and Breaux insisted that Bush had not given them any specific marching orders or tried to send them in any particular direction.

The president was pretty clear in his comments with us — that we have great latitude, there is no end result that he was trying to lead to, other than the fact that he said, you know, this is got to be simpler. ... The other objective they asked us to keep in mind is that it should be pro-growth, it should create greater opportunities for job creation," Mack said.

But though both former senators emphasized an open process that will draw in citizens and experts from around the country as they craft recommendations for a tax code overhaul, Snow made clear that the White House will have its hands in the effort the whole way.

The panel is to deliver its report to the Treasury Department by July 31.

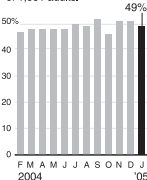


President Bush speaks with reporters Friday in the Oval Office of the White House after he met with members of the President's Panel on Federal Tax Reform. At right is vice chairman of the panel Sen. John Breaux, D-La.

AP-IPSSOS POLL

Presidential approval rating

President Bush's overall job approval rating from a survey of 1,001 adults.



Margin of error: ± 3.1 percentage points; registered voters prior to 2005; poll taken between Jan. 3-5

SOURCE: Ipsos-Public Affairs for AP

Public ambivalent in opinion of Bush

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The American public is deeply ambivalent about President Bush as he begins his second term and his approval rating is lower than any recent two-term presidents, a troubling sign for his ambitious agenda, an Associated Press poll found.

Bush's approval rating is at 49 percent in the AP poll, with 49 percent disapproving. His job approval is in the high 40s in several other recent polls — as low as any job approval rating for a re-elected president at the start of the second term in more than 50 years.

Presidents Ronald Reagan and Bill Clinton had job approval ratings near 60 percent just before their inauguration for a second term, according to Gallup polls.

Bush and Congress are about to tackle ambitious projects — creating private accounts for those in the Social Security system, overhauling the federal tax code and limiting lawsuit damages.

Those tasks will be all the more difficult with the tepid poll ratings for both Bush and Congress.

Specter: Gonzales should be approved

By MARK SHERMAN

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee said Friday he feels certain that Alberto Gonzales will be confirmed as attorney general despite concerns about his role in a Bush administration legal doctrine that critics said undermined prisoner-of-war protections and a law against torture.

Senate Judiciary Committee Chairman Arlen Specter said the nominee's defense of his role in revising

torture policy was "not entirely satisfactory" but predicted that would not derail his confirmation. "It's my sense that he'll have an overwhelming vote," Specter, a Republican, told NBC's "Today" show.

A committee Democrat, who said his own vote was still undecided, agreed with that prediction. "There's a lower standard, frankly, for attorney general than for judge, because you give the president who he wants," said Sen. Charles Schumer, a Democrat who was also appearing on "Today."

Through more than seven hours of testimony Thursday, Gonzales denied that his advice to President Bush led to abuse of prisoners in U.S. custody, and he condemned torture as an interrogation tactic.

Gonzales betrayed little emotion and at times gave lawyerly answers to pointed questions from Democrats. He did little to satisfy critics from human rights groups and in Congress, but neither did he say anything at his confirmation hearing that might damage his prospects of becoming the nation's first Hispanic attorney general.

Specter said the Republican-led Senate could vote to confirm the 49-year-old Texan as John Ashcroft's replacement before Bush begins his second term on Jan. 20. Committee Democrats addressed Gonzales as though his confirmation was all but assured.

Gonzales denied that any of the memos he wrote or reviewed in the White House had anything to do with the abuse.



Gonzales

Electoral flap sets Congress tone

WASHINGTON — A Democratic effort to highlight Ohio's Election Day voting troubles did not upset President Bush's official re-election, but did spark bitter squabbling that started the new Congress on a sharply partisan tone.

In a quadrennial joint session brimming with tradition, the House and Senate on Thursday affirmed Bush's victory 286-251 over Sen. John Kerry, D-Mass.

Democrats said their goal was to publicize the voting problems, not reverse the voting results. To achieve that, during the state-by-state examination of voting documents — in alphabetical order — Sen. Barbara Boxer, D-Calif., and Rep. Stephanie Tubbs Jones, D-Ohio, protested when Ohio's papers were drawn from the ceremonial mahogany box.

Understanding that, after the challenge forced the House and Senate to convene separately to consider the Ohio problems, the House rejected the protest by 267-31. The Senate vote was 74-1, with Boxer the only vote in support.

Senate debate took just over an hour, while the House — including an unusually long roll call — used almost three more.

From The Associated Press

Yates not likely to be freed despite ruling

By MICHAEL GRACZYK

The Associated Press

HOUSTON — The mother whose convictions in her children's drownings were tossed over false witness testimony is unlikely to see freedom soon, her lawyers said. The expert witness, meanwhile, said Friday he made an honest mistake and contended he got the erroneous information during a "passing conversation" with prosecutors.

Defense attorney George Parnham said he had no plans to seek Andrea Yates' release from the state prison.

A state appeals court on Thursday determined that the false testimony from forensic psychiatrist Park Dietz led to her improper conviction in three of the five children's drownings in 2001.

During trial, Dietz, a consultant for the television program "Law & Order," described what he said was a show about a

woman found innocent by reason of insanity for drowning her children. The three-judge appellate panel said prosecutors "connected the dots" with that false testimony to convince jurors that Yates pat-

terned her actions after the episode, which turned out not to exist.

Dietz told "Good Morning America" on Friday said he got convinced because prosecutors had told him there was a "Law & Order" episode with that plot.

"I believed they thought I would check it out and determine if it was true," he said. He said he hadn't done so because he didn't think Yates had acted because of a TV show.



Dietz

Judge drops charges against accused spy

BY LINDA DEUTSCH

The Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — A federal judge dismissed all charges against a former FBI informant accused of being a Chinese double agent, saying federal prosecutors engaged in deliberate misconduct in the case.

U.S. District Judge Florence Marie Cooper on Thursday said

the government blocked Katrina Leung's access to a critical defense witness — retired FBI agent James J. Smith, who for years was Leung's lover.

Leung, a wealthy socialite from the Los Angeles suburb of San Marino, allegedly took classified documents from Smith's briefcase. She was not accused of transmitting them to China.

The judge said prosecutors pur-

posely kept defense attorneys from contacting Smith as they prepared for Leung's trial. In doing so, Cooper said, prosecutors violated Leung's due process rights.

Smith was the longtime FBI "handler" for Leung, a naturalized U.S. citizen who was recruited 20 years ago to work for the FBI by gathering intelligence during her frequent business trips to China.

Prosecutors claim she began working for China around 1990.

Smith has pleaded guilty to a single count of making a false statement about the affair and agreed to cooperate with the government. He had been accused of mishandling classified material and allowing it to fall into Leung's hands.

U.S. attorney's spokesman Thom Mrozek said prosecutors

strongly disagree with the ruling but had not decided how to respond.

"While litigating this motion we argued the government did not prohibit Mr. Smith from speaking to Ms. Leung's attorneys if he chose to do so," he said.

The government could drop the case, ask Cooper to reconsider or take the issue to the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals.

Study: Extra gene copies help protect people from AIDS

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Having extra copies of a gene that produces a blocking protein helps protect people from AIDS, a finding that may explain why some people are more susceptible to the disease than others, a new study reports.

Researchers wondering why people from the same ancestry varied in their ability to resist HIV and AIDS found differences in the number of copies of the gene that encodes CCL3L1, a protein that blocks HIV, the virus that causes AIDS.

Researchers hope the finding, reported in Thursday's online issue of the journal *Science*, helps them identify people who have a higher or lower susceptibility to the disease.

"Individual risk of acquiring HIV and experiencing rapid disease progression is not uniform within populations," said Dr. Anthony S. Fauci, director of National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Disease, which funded the study.

"This important study identifies genetic factors of particular groups that either mitigate or enhance one's susceptibility to infection and disease onset," Fauci said in a statement.

The study looked at more than 4,300 blood samples from people of different ancestral origins to determine the average number of CCL3L1 gene copies in each group.



Workers at NASA's New Orleans facility move the redesigned shuttle fuel tank to a barge that transported it to the Kennedy Space Center in Florida on Dec. 31. The redesigned fuel tank, a 6-foot-long plant that supplies propellant for the launch of the space shuttle, completed its 900-mile trip to Florida on Thursday.

AP

Shuttle team welcomes new fuel tank

BY MARCIA DUNN

The Associated Press

CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla. — A redesigned fuel tank for NASA's first post-Columbia launch emerged from a darkened barge into the morning sunlight Thursday, inspiring dozens of space shuttle workers who gathered to watch.

"We're no longer recovering from the accident. We're really heading toward a launch. Big change in momentum and morale," launch director Mike Leimbach said.

The arrival of the external fuel tank from a manufactur-

ing plant in Louisiana moved the space program closer to its goal of a late spring liftoff for Discovery. It was a suitcase-size piece of insulating foam from Columbia's fuel tank that triggered that shuttle's breakup as it re-entered the atmosphere over Texas nearly two years ago.

On the new tank, no foam piece bigger than a couple of marshmallows should come off, said project manager Sandy Coleman.

Anything that small would be harmless to the shuttle, she said.

Some workers photographed

the 154-foot orange-yellow tank as it was hauled atop a wheeled flatbed into the Vehicle Assembly Building, and others walked alongside, pointing out new features.

Clearly missing were the pair of foam ramps that caused the deadly shedding during Columbia's final flight. In their place were eight new heaters, designed to prevent ice building up when super-cold fuel is loaded right before launch.

Shuttle program manager Bill Parsons called the tank the safest ever built, "no doubt about it."

Parsons, who was celebrat-

ing his 48th birthday, called the tank's arrival the perfect gift.

"It's back to business," said Parsons. "It's getting where we are really feeling like we're going to pull this off, and I think that that's just an indication, one of those big symbols that comes in and says, 'You're there. You're getting there.'"

Within half an hour, the tank was inside the assembly building, where it will undergo a month of final prep work.

The tank will be attached to the two solid rocket boosters in February, and all that will be mounted to Discovery in March.

Polls often fail at forecasting future

BY WILL LESTER

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The American public has a pretty tough crystal ball.

Polls were never intended to predict the future — and that's probably a good thing, given their limited success in forecasting.

While the American public's reading of the economy is usually quite accurate and can hint at future spending trends, the public struggles when trying to predict the future.

For example, most Americans in mid-1965 said they thought the United States would be more successful than the communists at winning over the Vietnamese people.

Most said in the late 1980s that a cure for AIDS was likely before 2000.

In early 2001, most thought health problems would keep Vice President Dick Cheney from completing a full term.

None of these predictions came true.

"The American public doesn't have a good track record as a predictor of events," said Marilyn Bowman, a polling specialist at the American Enterprise Institute who has studied public attitudes about the future.

When done carefully, polling fares well at measuring attitudes.

One of the most reliable predictors of behavior can be found in economic polling.

"Where questions about the future are most relevant is with regard to economic expectations and purchasing," said Robert Shapiro, a public opinion specialist at Columbia University.

When people are asked about situations of which they have little firsthand knowledge, their responses are largely guesswork. But even in those cases, there have been instances when public expectations were on the mark.

Seven in 10 in the late 1980s said they thought it was unlikely that communism would largely disappear in the next decade. While diminished, communism didn't disappear.

And sometimes people just tend to believe the worst will happen.

Asked in the late 1990s whether the crime rate will rise over the next 50 years, a majority said they thought it would.

"When asked questions on expectations about the nation's social fabric," Bowman said, "people are generally pessimistic."

Will Lester covers polling and politics for The Associated Press.

Dinosaur footprints found near nation's capital

COLLEGE PARK, Md. — Near the sprawl of a major highway, an amateur paleontologist found what he says are the first footprints ever uncovered of a 6-foot-long plant-eating dinosaur that roamed the Earth about 100 million years ago.

In addition to being the first tracks ever found of the dinosaur, the footprints are the first evidence that members of the Hypsilophodont family roamed what is now Maryland.

"It was thrilling, in a sense, because it became a world 'first,'" Ray Stanford, who has spent 10 years digging in streambeds near the Interstate 95 corridor, told The (Baltimore) Sun.

Bouncers accused of killing New Orleans tourist

NEW ORLEANS — Three Bourbon Street bouncers were booked with negligent homicide after a coroner said a Georgia college student died of suffocation because they held him in a choke hold for 12 minutes.

Coroner Frank Minyard said Levon Jones' death was caused by a combination of the choke hold and pressure on his back that prevented him from taking breaths.

"The bouncers killed that man — period," Minyard said. "He said it was probably an accident." "The bouncers didn't have that in mind at the time, I'm sure, but that's how it happened," he said.

Arthur Irons, 40, Clay Montz, 32, and Matthew Taylor, 21, turned themselves into police Thursday night after warrants were issued for their arrests. New Orleans police spokesman Paul Accardo said.

From The Associated Press

Winner steps up

FL TALLAHASSEE — It took Robert G. Swofford Jr. more than a month to come forward and claim his \$60 million Lotto prize, but he had to take care of some unfinished business — divorcing his wife.

Swofford, a postal worker from Seminole County, claimed his prize Tuesday in a \$34.7 million lump sum payout, ending weeks of mystery about who won the Nov. 24 drawing.

Swofford, 53, and his wife separated three years ago. But two weeks after the winning numbers were announced, Ann Swofford served him with divorce papers and claimed a share of the prize.

Just before Christmas, the Swoffords and their lawyers hammered out an agreement. His wife will get \$5.25 million and \$1 million will be set aside to support their 11-year-old son.

Ticket on top of injury

UT ST. GEORGE — A man who managed to drive himself to the emergency room after being shot in the calf with a nail gun got more bad news after having his wound treated.

He was ticketed for not stopping when ordered.

Utah Highway Patrol Trooper Ben Lang started chasing the man's vehicle Tuesday after it was spotted driving recklessly on Interstate 15 and tailed the man to the hospital.

At one point, Lang said he told the driver over a loudspeaker to pull over and said the man got out of his car at a stop light. When Lang told him to get back in his car and pull over, the man took off again toward the hospital.

Kidney offered to friend

MN MINNEAPOLIS — The brotherhood of cops in Minneapolis is about to get even closer thanks to one officer's decision to offer a kidney to an ailing colleague.

Officer Ron Reier, Police Department spokesman, was scheduled to donate a kidney this week to fellow officer and friend Jeff Seidl.

Seidl has to undergo kidney dialysis three times a week. He needs another kidney transplant because the kidney he received from a relative began to fail about a year ago.

Reier said testing showed they're "enough of a match to make it work."

The transplant was scheduled Friday at Fairview University Medical Center. Both officers plan to return to work in a few weeks.

Tree blaze kills 1

NY NEW YORK — A boy playing with a cigarette lighter set a Christmas tree ablaze in a Queens apartment building, starting a fire that killed one person and injured several others, authorities said.

The fire began on the first floor of 96-05 50th Avenue in the Corona section and was under control, the Fire Department said. Flames spread to the upper floors of the building, and firefighters found a dead boy inside an apartment on



AMERICAN ROUNDUP

the third floor.

The boy's grandfather, Javier Urbano, 48, told Newsday that he was asleep at the time the fire was set.

Bartender charged

TX HOUSTON — A bartender was jailed in the shooting death of a customer who had argued over a missing purse at a tavern.

Willie A. Burton was held in lieu of \$40,000 bail on a murder charge. Police said Burton, 35, is charged in the death of Jaquana Singleton, 26.

Singleton's family said she and Burton then got into a heated argument about finding the missing purse. Burton allegedly pulled a handgun from her pocket during the argument and shot Singleton once, said investigators.

Police said the missing purse was found later in a trash bin outside the northeast Houston bar.

Grizzly bear tracks

AK FAIRBANKS — A jokerish bear — or perhaps a deformed one — is trying to freak out hikers.

The Alaska Department of Fish and Game has received several reports of people walking trails at Creamer's Field who came across



Flipping over temps

Sean Kingsbury, from Monterey, Calif., does a back flip while enjoying a break in the weather at the Carmel River State Beach.

grizzly bear tracks.

But, upon closer inspection, officials are ruling out a real bear.

"It's either a person or a circus bear with two left front feet walking on its hands," said state wildlife biologist Harry Reynolds. "There are no hind tracks."

The tracks feature a foot pad, toes and claws that stretch out 3 inches from the toes. Reynolds said it's either a boot or some attachment someone is putting on a boot.

Pushing county merge

ME AUGUSTA — A legislator from Appleton is pushing a plan to merge Maine's 16 counties into eight to help ease the state's property tax burden. County government is the fastest-growing service that relies on property taxes, and tax reform should begin with reform of county government, Barbara Merrill said.

Snake not cause of crash

CA SAN FRANCISCO — A woman who died after hitting a tree while driving on the expressway was found with her pet boa constrictor around her neck, but police say they don't believe the snake had anything to do with the accident.

Acquaintances said Margaret Ann Walters, 29, often wore her 3-foot-long boa constrictor. Police said they found an open container of alcohol in her car.

The snake, which survived the crash, was taken to an animal shelter.

Animal cruelty charges

ID EVANSVILLE — Misdemeanor charges of animal cruelty, not felonies, will be filed against two former Wal-Mart assistant managers accused of shooting and killing a stray cat in a food-store trailer.

Vanderburgh County Prosecutor Stan Levco said he decided to file the charges after meeting with the sheriff's detective who investigated the animal-cruelty complaint. Levco added he also considered charging the store's former head manager, Darrel Weitzel, with animal cruelty. But the detective who questioned those involved determined Weitzel did not order an assistant manager to kill the stray.

Contraband conviction

CO COLORADO SPRINGS — A man serving a life sentence for murder was sentenced to three additional years in prison for passing out cheese sandwiches while in jail.

Douglas Eugene Wilson, 45, pleaded guilty to possession of contraband and was sentenced by District Judge Thomas Kane.

Prosecutors said Wilson had the sandwiches while in jail awaiting trial on the murder charge and he tried to give them to other inmates, which is a violation of jail rules.

A sheriff's deputy testified at a hearing in May that they warned Wilson not to pass food to other inmates then shocked him with a stun gun when he ignored them.



Game time

Aaron Laughlin, 8, background, smiles as Dalton Hargrove, 6, aims a basketball in the Yucca Recreation Center's gym in Roswell, N.M.



Room on the rocks

Brett Thorne, 25, is silhouetted in a misty window in Kansas City, Mo., as he painted the interior of a building the color Margarita Green. He is helping a friend convert the former antique store into the second location of Scott Fitness.



Icy conditions

A car carefully makes its way down an ice-coated lane in Bainbridge, Ohio. A mix of snow, sleet, and rain fell from the skies, making travel treacherous.



Always prepared

Reed Ronan of Arkadelphia, Ark., gathered all the umbrellas he could find to make a rain tent in his front yard.



Wet kisses

Jo Lynn Mehaffy, a groomer at Wild Dog Ranch Grooming Co., in Burlington, Iowa, gives Buddy, a schnauzer and poodle mix, a kiss while giving the dog a hair cut.

Drought worries no more

CA SANTA BARBARA — City officials' worries over three dry winters are washing away. Two weeks of rain have caused Gibraltar Dam to spill over the top and Lake Cachuma has risen 19 feet since Sept. 1. Before the rains, the City Council was gearing up to declare a drought warning to residents. It will revisit the issue in April.

Sentence in attack

TX FORT WORTH — A man who fatally shot his estranged wife and wounded her lover in 1998 was sentenced to 15 years in prison for attacking the suitor.

The assailant's son, in tearful testimony, blamed him for his mother's loss.

Jimmy Dean Watkins pleaded guilty to attempted capital murder for shooting Keith Fontenot during the confrontation in which he killed his wife, Nancy, with multiple gunshots.

Jurors in October 1999 convicted Watkins of murder but found that he shot his wife under "audacious passion." Watkins received 10 years' probation in a decision that stunned prosecutors and gained national attention. State District Judge Bob Gill of Fort Worth sentenced him to 120 days in prison as a condition of the probation on his wife's slaying.

Abuse allegations denied

KS TOPEKA — A couple pleaded not guilty in federal court to criminal charges stemming from allegations they abused mentally ill adults in their care.

The 35 charges against Arlan D. Kaufman, 68, and his wife, Linda J., 61, include conspiracy, mail fraud, health care fraud, holding mentally ill adults in involuntary servitude and forcing them to do labor.

The Kaufmans operated a treatment center in Newton, in central Kansas, for the mentally ill. A complaint filed in October accused them of abusing residents and forcing some of them to work nude on a farm about 50 miles from the group home in 1999.

A federal grand jury indictment issued last week also alleged they physically, psychologically and sexually abused group home residents, kept two people in involuntary servitude for 14 years, and defrauded the federal Medicare.

Clout from grave

MN ANOKA — Longtime Anoka City Council member John Weaver has remained a political force even from beyond the grave.

In a letter opened to the public, Weaver asked that his son, Jeff, be selected to replace him on the City Council.

The letter was written before Weaver's Dec. 18 death of cancer.

Jeff Weaver, who has never held elective office, said he appreciates his father's plan. "It would have been done with a wink and a smile," he said.

Some on the council want to honor John Weaver's request. But if the council splits 2-2, Mayor Bjorn Skogquist can appoint a suc-

cessor.

Realty prices soar

HI HONOLULU — The median price for an existing, single-family home on Oahu reached a record \$495,000 in December, when 417 single-family homes and 701 condominiums were sold, an industry expert said. The median prices for condos last month was \$217,000, down slightly from November. Harvey Shapiro, Honolulu Board of Realtors research economist, says Hawaii's strong housing market is expected to continue this year.

Incorrect census count

MA BOSTON — The state's Inspector General says Gov. Mitt Romney failed to take steps to force the U.S. Census Bureau to correct Massachusetts' population by adding the 30,000 college students living in the Bay State.

"I think it's very disappointing that a matter of this financial magnitude could slip through the cracks," Inspector General Gregory W. Sullivan said in a letter he sent Romney. He attributed the incorrect count to a data-gathering flaw, and said he had warned Romney of the problem in May 2003.

The census bureau announced last month that Massachusetts was the only state in the nation that lost population between 2003 and 2004.

The state is losing about \$24 million in federal funds for Medicaid and community development block grants because of the under-count, Sullivan said.

Unwanted shower

FL EAGLE LAKE — Say it, don't spray it.

That's the message from Vice Mayor Dennis Pate, who accused former city manager Linda Weldon of spewing saliva at him after a city of council meeting last month. He wants a new rule to prohibit spitting at meetings.

But Weldon denies that saliva ever passed her lips.

"That is the most asinine and juvenile thing I have heard," she said.

The alleged spitting was preceded by an argument between Pate and Weldon over two minor issues at a city council meeting.

Biosphere expansion

AZ TUCSON — The Texas company that built and owns the Biosphere 2 Center near Oracle has formally put up for sale the 3.1-acre glass terrarium and 70 other buildings on the 140-acre campus.

"This is one of the most spectacular properties in Southern Arizona — if not the most spectacular — so we think it should attract some interest," said Christopher T. Bannon, general manager of Decisions Investment Corp. of Fort Worth, which owns Biosphere 2.

The campus, 16 miles north of Tucson in Pinal County, has more than 300,000 square feet of space including offices, classrooms, laboratories, residential housing, and a hotel and conference center.

It remains open as a tourist destination and Bannon said more than 85,000 people visited the center last year.

Stories and photos from wire services

AFRTS Television Schedule

Updated sports listings are available on the first Scoreboard page in the sports section or AFN's Web site at <http://myafn.dodmedia.osd.mil>

FACES

Star comes of age with 'Phantom'

Young actress Emmy Rossum winning raves in famous role

BY ELAINE DUTKA
The Los Angeles Times

At 12, Emmy Rossum was a student at Manhattan's chic, all-girl Spence School when educators upset with her frequent absences delivered an ultimatum: Spend less time at the Metropolitan Opera, where she had been singing in the children's chorus for five years, or sever her ties with their institution.

She chose the latter. While she missed out on the usual high school camaraderie, the trade-offs were considerable: By night she performed alongside stars including Plácido Domingo, Kiri Te Kanawa and Denyce Graves and by day took "virtual classes" sponsored online by Stanford University. At the Met, she also learned breath control, language dexterity and discipline — handy skills when, shortly thereafter, she switched her focus to acting.

That path, like her previous one, has been an education in itself. After a series of TV roles, Rossum, then 13, played a tooth-deprived Appalachian orphan in Maggie Greenwald's "Songcatcher" — a performance the Independent Spirit Awards honored as the "best debut" in 2000. Two years later, she picked up pointers from a Who's Who of Hollywood talent, playing Penn Penn's murdered daughter in Clint Eastwood's critically acclaimed "Mystic River." Last summer, Rossum co-starred as a brainiac love interest in the global-warming disaster film "The Day After Tomorrow."

Nothing prepared her, however, for assuming a lead role in Joel Schumacher's \$70-million film version of Andrew Lloyd Webber's "The Phantom of the Opera." Although the picture has elicited mixed reviews, Rossum has come out a winner.

The National Board of Review called her portrayal of Christine, a young soprano at the Paris Opera who falls under the Phantom's spell, the best breakthrough performance by an actress this year. The Broadcast Film Critics Association also gave her a critics' choice award. And, next month, the 18-year-old will be competing for best actress in a musical or comedy at the Golden Globe ceremony.

Reached at the tiny New York apartment she shares with her mom and teacup Maltese, Chrissy, Rossum basks in the afterglow. Three bouquets arrive during her 90-minute stretch.

And her Spence classmates have been calling. "It seems to have slipped their minds, Rossum observes dryly, that — lacking designer clothes and upper-crust credentials — she'd never been embraced by them. Now it's all about having lunch... six years too late.

Schumacher, a Hollywood veteran ("The Client"), knows the syndrome well. Success is a "bucking bronco," he said, and the bumps are inevitable.

"Child performers have additional pressures," the director said.

"Either they go crazy and become drug-craddled slackers, or they incorporate the training into their DNA. Emmy has an incredible work ethic. She was a young girl of 16 at the beginning of the shoot and a formidable woman at the end."

Even before she plunged into "Phantom," however, Rossum was a force. Greenwald remarked that she was "very assertive for someone so young." And Alan Hruska, who directed her in the 2003 romantic comedy "Nola," commented on the youngster's "keen sense of her own worth."

The daughter of a photographer mother and banker father who divorced when she was 3, Rossum is certainly no shrinking violet.

Self-reassured and intelligent, she admits to being "sassy" and headstrong — and makes no apologies for that. On "Phantom," she says, Schumacher gave her creative



Actress Emmy Rossum arrives at the premiere of her new movie, "The Phantom of the Opera," in Leicester Square in London last month. The film is based on the musical by Sir Andrew Lloyd Webber.

freedom, and she was determined to make the most of the role.

After auditioning 200 actresses over a six-month stretch, Schumacher came up empty-handed.

Then he learned about Rossum, giving her a call in May 2003, right after "The Day After Tomorrow" wrapped. Two days later she was back in New York singing "Think of Me" for her screen test.

Watching her in costume and full make-up, co-star Gerard Butler, who plays the Phantom, stood behind Schumacher at the monitor and whispered "hire her" in his ear. Rossum repeated the tune for Lloyd Webber in his New York apartment and, obviously, scored again. A few days later, her agent was on the phone to her, saying she'd gotten the part — a moment equal to that, a few years back, when she got "Mystic River" and "The Day After Tomorrow" in the same 24-hour period.

The actress intentionally avoided seeing the stage production to avoid any preconceptions. Her goal: to ground the character in reality — no matter that it was a musical. Rossum studied the older man-younger woman relationship through choreographer George Balanchine and ballerina Suzanne Farrell to get a grip on the student-mentor dynamic. She attended a seance to better understand Christine, still coming to terms with her father's death. Before the shoot, she studied ballet and started singing again after a five-year hiatus.

"Because the set is such an artificial environment — hair, makeup, 'Action' — I need to tap into my memory bank and find something to draw on," she said. "I always break myself down emotionally, enlarging certain parts of myself. All of a sudden, I'm more Christine than Emmy, a moth in larva coming out of the shell."

"This shoot was tough on my family because — inhibiting Christine's terror and pain — I was depressed, tormented, for six months. Wearing the tightest of corsets for 14 hours a day made things even tougher."

Rather than paralyzing her newfound fame into high-profile assignments, Rossum is leaning toward two smaller projects. One deals with drug addiction and the other with a real-life 19-year-old athlete who has overcome prejudice and adversity. A new album, she suggests, would also be a nice change — a chance to express herself rather than a character. Sarah McLachlan, Celine Dion and Evanescence are among her musical muses.

No trace of Swedish cellist after tsunami

Beach Boys founder Brian Wilson is asking for help in finding a Swedish cellist swept away in the South Asian tsunami.

Markus Sandlund, 29, of the Stockholm Strings n' Horns, performed on Wilson's Grammy-nominated "Smile" album and Wilson's recent "Smile" tour. Sandlund and his girlfriend, Sophia, went to Thailand after finishing the "Smile" tour in Australia and New Zealand, according to a statement Wednesday on Wilson's Web site.

The couple, vacationing at the Orchid Beach Resort at Khao Lak, were in the hotel pool when the enormous wave hit. Sophia was swept away and later rescued, but Sandlund has not been found.

"I have been devastated since I heard the news that Markus is missing in Thailand," Wilson said. The 62-year-old singer-songwriter says he has sent an "agent" to try to find Sandlund but has turned up no trace of him. He asked that anyone with any information contact his Web site.

"My prayers go out to all of the victims and their families and I would ask you to say a prayer for Markus' safe return," Wilson added.



Sandlund

Poll: Hendrix sports best guitar face

Jimmi Hendrix not only had the skills to become a rock legend — he apparently had the right look as well.

A recent poll found that Hendrix had the best "guitar face" — the look guitarists get when trying to nail a high note or power chord.

Hendrix received 24 percent of the 3,000 votes cast online by the public and a poll by some 20 celebrity judges. B.B. King captured 18 percent of the vote, followed by Angus Young of AC/DC with 16 percent.

Gary Lucas, guitarist for Gods and Monsters, said he voted for Hendrix because he "channeled all the soulful ecstasy of the universe through his hands, and this was naturally mirrored in his face."

The poll by on-demand television service Mag Rack accompanied a contest to find the best amateur guitar face. Les Campbell of Nicholasville, Ky., was chosen the winner from more than 600 contestants.

In his photo, Campbell, a sound and recording engineer, showcases a classic headbanging. Py Manchu muscled up Elvis Presley's face as well as a resemblance to Metallica frontman James Hetfield, according to several of the judges.

Final season for 'The Osbournes'

Mark your calendars — the *Ozzy Osbourne* clan will be back Jan. 17 with the final season of their reality show, MTV announced Thursday.

"The Osbournes" chronicles the lives of goth-rock 'Ozzy, his wife, Sharon, and two of their children — daughter Kelly and son Jack. They first arrived MTV cameras into their Beverly Hills, Calif., home in 2002.

The hit TV series showcases the offbeat antics of the family as Ozzy and Sharon deal with the complexities of running a household — usually with a slew of obstinacies.

"After three years, the MTV cameras became part of the family, documenting what is possibly the most dramatic year we have had," Sharon Osbourne said in a statement.

Stone surprised by criticism of movie

Director Oliver Stone said he was surprised by the critical reaction to his historical epic "Alexander" — and put the blame on the fundamentalist morality in some parts of the United States.

Critics lambasted the movie, which stars Irish actor Colin Farrell, and some conservative groups condemned Stone's depiction of the Macedonian conqueror's sexuality.

"I was quite taken aback by the controversy and fierceness of the reviews about a character we don't really know too much about," Stone told reporters in New York Wednesday before the film's British premiere.

"I operate on my passion and sometimes I'm naive, I don't think about the consequences," he said.

Stories and photos from The Associated Press

YOUR MONEY

Loans heavy burden for some students

BY PETER SVENSSON

The Associated Press

NEW YORK — Brennan Taylor has a good job, but spending \$200 on his daughter's seventh birthday seems like "an awful lot."

"I'm trying to set a strict budget for the household," said Taylor, 34, a Madison, N.J., resident. "It's pretty stressful."

Taylor's finances and credit are lobbied by student loans — a fifth of his income every month goes toward paying down that debt.

Surgings college costs have saddled many people like him with steep debt at the start of their professional lives.

A 2002 survey of recent graduates by student loan company Nellie Mae found that the average student loan burden for a bachelor's degree was \$18,900, up 66 percent from five years earlier.

Thanks to low interest rates and increased initial salaries, the average amount recent graduates were spending on debt repayment was just 7 percent of their annual incomes. That number that has been fairly unchanged for the last 10 years and is considered manageable.

But many graduates' debt burdens are well above average. And many who follow passions that aren't bankable, make a few financial missteps or are just plain unlucky can find their debts are out of control.



Brennan Taylor, left, sits with his daughter, Dirdre, and son, Crispin, right, and his wife, Krista White, at their home in Madison, N.J., on Monday. Taylor says he has to set a strict budget for the household because he is paying off his student loans and his wife is still studying for an advanced degree and racking up more debt.

Cherise Fung, 30, put herself through Cornell University after her parents died during her freshman year. Because she took several leaves of absence, it took her 10 years to graduate. And she was already dealing with financial problems when she returned to school from her last leave.

"I still haven't recovered from that one semester. And that was in 2001," the Flanders, N.J., resident said.

Now, Fung is finding that her degree in anthropology isn't opening a lot of doors. Her expenses are hard to meet with the jobs she's been getting, mostly office work.

"There's times when I wonder if maybe I would have been better off getting a job and not bothering with college," she said.

Part of the problem is that a bachelor's degree doesn't always cut it in today's workplace.

"The bachelor's degree has become the new high school degree," said Tamara Draut at Demos, New York-based think tank. A graduate degree is necessary to reach get to the top level of more and more professions.

"It's happening in education, business, even social work," Draut said.

Taylor got a graduate degree in Internet strategy management four years ago. It cost him \$30,000 in loans, but has paid off with a job in Web publishing. Before that, he had "really crummy jobs."

Part of the reason he's still having trouble making ends meet is that his wife is working on a doctorate in anthropology and religion, a field where an advanced degree is practically necessary for work. She has racked up more than \$100,000 in debt and has two more years to go.

"What I'm dreading is when my wife's going to be done, because that's going to be huge, and her income probably isn't going to help a lot," Taylor said.

Among the effects of higher debt, according to the 2002 Nellie Mae survey: 38 percent of graduates reported delaying buying a home because of their loans, up from 25 percent in 1991, and 21 percent postponed having children, up from 12 percent in 1991.

Because he's often a month behind on student loan payments, Taylor has had enough credit problems that he doubts he'll ever be able to afford a house. Besides, he said, his wife's loans will be almost "mortgage scale."

As tuition costs and enrollment rose through the 1990s, grant money did not keep pace, meaning students have been shouldering an ever-increasing share of their education costs. While before, most were able to finance their studies with grants and part-time work, loans are now inescapable for many.

"This generation is the first to shoulder the costs of their college primarily through interest-bearing

College debt deepens by degree

A 2002 survey of recent graduates found the average student loan for a bachelor's degree was \$18,900, up 66 percent from five years earlier.

Borrowers in debt by degree

10% or less
\$10,001 to \$20,000
\$20,001 to \$30,000
More than \$30,000

Bachelor's By percentage

13 45 24 16

Master's

6 18 22 53

Ph.D. 3

20 13 83

Professional

13 12 6 69

May not add to 100 due to rounding

Average lifetime earnings for college degrees compared to a high school diploma

Bachelor's

\$1.3 million

Master's \$1.7

Ph.D. \$2.6

Professional \$3.9

Source: 2002 National Student Loan Survey, Nellie Mae



Source: 2002 National Student Loan Survey, Nellie Mae

ing loans rather than grants," Draut said.

Jackeline King, director at the American Council on Education's Center for Policy Analysis, believes the picture for more recent graduates may be even bleaker because the job market has weakened.

"I think that we've been insulated from feeling the full effect of the increased borrowing by the fact that interest rates have been low, and up until the most recent years, the job market has been good," King said.

Cents and Sensibility
Money tip of the day

Job forecast looks good

CBS MarketWatch

NEW YORK — This year's college graduates stand to have an easier time finding employment than those of recent years, reports the National Association of Colleges and Employers. Of employers queried in the association's annual survey, 61 percent said they plan to increase their hiring, 23 percent will maintain hiring levels and only 16 percent will decrease the number of new

college graduates they hire compared to last year.

Last year, 51 percent of employers planned to increase the number of recent college graduates hired while 28 percent planned to decrease that number.

Employers said they were also more optimistic about the challenges they will face this year, planning to increase competition from other employers to find the right candidate and successfully attract students to a given industry or location.

THURSDAY'S MARKET SUMMARY

INDEXES				
	52-week High	Low	Home	
Dow Jones Industrial	10,611.81	1,018.41	10,592.81	+15.66
S&P 500	3,023.28	2,743.46	3,018.28	+13.81
Nasdaq	3,177.78	2,591.86	3,177.78	+22.94
Dow Jones Industrials	7,713.18	6,211.33	7,713.18	+21.71
Nasdaq Composite	1,458.58	1,158.74	1,458.58	+12.71
Nasdaq Composite	2,119.18	1,750.82	2,119.18	+12.46
S&P 500	1,217.00	1,060.72	1,217.00	+12.46
S&P 500	546.29	446.29	546.29	+12.46
Russell 2000	556.11	515.90	556.11	+12.46
Volatility	12.24	10.38	12.24	+0.01

NYSE				
Most Active (\$1 or more)	Volume	Change	High	Low
Alcatel	540,842	+1.57	54.08	52.51
Alcatel	289,150	+2.12	28.91	27.79
Alcatel	191,175	+1.17	19.17	18.00
Alcatel	186,609	+3.12	18.66	17.54
Alcatel	176,525	+4.13	17.65	16.52
Alcatel	161,113	+5.14	16.11	15.00
Alcatel	146,443	+6.15	14.64	13.51
Alcatel	131,111	+7.16	13.11	12.00
Alcatel	116,111	+8.17	11.61	10.50
Alcatel	101,111	+9.18	10.11	9.00

KEY DEFENSE STOCKS				
Home	Vol	Change	High	Low
Alcatel	1,000	15.00	15.00	13.00
Alcatel	1,000	15.00	15.00	13.00
Alcatel	1,000	15.00	15.00	13.00
Alcatel	1,000	15.00	15.00	13.00
Alcatel	1,000	15.00	15.00	13.00
Alcatel	1,000	15.00	15.00	13.00
Alcatel	1,000	15.00	15.00	13.00
Alcatel	1,000	15.00	15.00	13.00
Alcatel	1,000	15.00	15.00	13.00
Alcatel	1,000	15.00	15.00	13.00

EXCHANGE RATES

Military rates		\$1 =
Dollar buys	0.67370	
British pound	1.6131	
Japanese yen (Jan. 10)	102.00	
South Korean won (Jan. 10)	1,031.00	
Commercial rates		
British pound	1.6131	
Dollar (dollar)	1.2396	
Denmark (dollar)	6.532	
Egypt (pound)	6.0702	
Hong Kong (dollar)	7.7941	
Hungary (forint)	131.770	
Iceland (krona)	107.45	
Israel (shekel)	4.3871	
Japan (yen)	106.66	
Kuwait (dinar)	2.9151	
Norway (kroner)	56.34	
Philippines (dollar)	55.30	
Saudi Arabia (riyal)	3.59	
Switzerland (franc)	1.06750	
Taiwan (dollar)	35.09	
Thailand (baht)	53.18	
Turkey (New Lira)	1.3465	

NASDAQ		Most Active (\$1 or more)
Home	Vol	Change
Nasdaq	188,111	38.15
Nasdaq	188,111	38.15
Nasdaq	188,111	38.15
Nasdaq	188,111	38.15
Nasdaq	188,111	38.15
Nasdaq	188,111	38.15
Nasdaq	188,111	38.15
Nasdaq	188,111	38.15
Nasdaq	188,111	38.15
Nasdaq	188,111	38.15

(i.e., purchasing British pounds in Germany), check with your local military banking facility. Commercial rates are inter-bank rates provided for reference when buying currency. All figures are foreign currencies to one dollar, except for the British pound, which is represented in dollars-to-pound, and the euro, which is dollars-to-euro.)

PRECIOUS METALS

London close	
Gold	\$418.20
Silver	\$6.40

INTEREST RATES

Prime rate	5.25
Discount rate	3.25
Federal funds market rate	3.25
90-day bill	2.75
30-year bond	4.85

Sources: The Associated Press, Bank of

Source: The Associated Press, Merrill Lynch & Co.

Source: The Associated Press, Merrill Lynch & Co.

Horoscope

The moon, Mercury, Venus, Mars and Pluto are having a cosmic prom in Sagittarius while the Capricorn sun watches like a chaperone with a ruler to make sure nobody gets too close on the dance floor. We want to cut loose — and we do cut loose — with the caveat in the back of our minds that we are being supervised.

TODAY'S BIRTHDAY (January 8). Commitments are made and kept, offering you a feeling of peace and security through the year.

Firing turns serious this month. Couples sneak away and renew interest in one another before the winter is over. Working at home brings extra money and a chance to invest in something exciting and lucrative in the spring. Love signs are Libra and Aries.

ARIES (March 21-April 19).

All bets are off. Though you're seeking a relationship with a person of great feeling and conscience, you could, paradoxically, get more substance out of a passing friendship with a person who is frivolous and fun.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20).

Release judgment. Fanciful notions are sounder than reasonable ones. Female energy has something to add to your life now. Wise words emanate from the grown daughter of someone you know.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21).

Random details aren't so random after all. Be reassured that order reigns behind the scenes. You'll piece together two or three clues and come to a conclusion. Share what you learn with friends.

CANCER (June 22-July 22).

Conflicting impulses are featured: the need for order and security, and the craving for novelty and adventure. By hanging out with an air sign (Libra, Gemini or Aquarius), you can meet both appetites in one experience.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22).

There's no question what you must do in order to succeed. Terms that were

once uncertain are now clearly defined. A partner lays down a gospel that you'd be wise to obey if you want the relationship to work.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22).

The day plays out like a slow ballad. The buildup and the payoff come at predictable moments, so make sure you're there to sing along. Anyone who avoids the action will really be missing out.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23).

You're attracted to danger. Your behavior in a certain relationship could be likened to a sword dance. One slip, and you could hurt yourself, not to mention the other person. Still, there's grace and beauty in this connection.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21).

Your inner dialogue is a stark contrast to your actions — good thing. When you'd love to freak out, you remain relaxed, amiable and entertaining. By day's end, there are people in your realm who'd like to be you.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21).

There's wisdom in your instincts that simply can't be accessed through your rational mind. So when faced with a dilemma, as you will be this afternoon, breathe slowly and deeply, quieting your mind. Think with your gut.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19).

Someone attempts to entice you with promises that are just too wonderful. The skeptic in you leaps to the rescue. You're enriched by an interaction with a tender, respectful brother figure.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18).

You feel ready to move on to the next level, but something stops you. Probably, the work you've done isn't exactly the work that is required. Ask questions, and make adjustments, and you'll get your breakthrough.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20).

What's been offered to you in the past is no indication of what can and will be offered to you in the future. Remain optimistic. Use a unique approach to romance, one that you've never tried before.

Creators Syndicate

Holiday Mathis



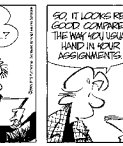
Calvin and Hobbes



Jump Start



Zits



Cathy



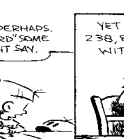
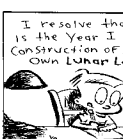
Hi and Lois



Beetle Bailey



Red Rover



Better or Worse



Peanuts



Fotrot



B.C.



Baby Blues



Spider Man



Blondie



Dilbert



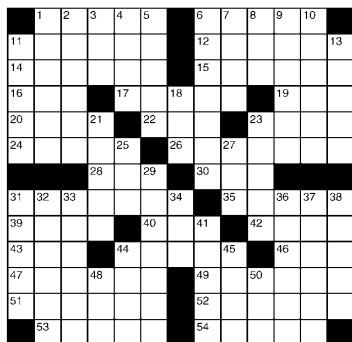
Hagar



Garfield



Eugene Sheffer Crossword



Across

- 1 1997 movie starring Shaq
6 Code name?
11 Balanced
12 Horrific
14 Modest
15 "That Scrambled Word Game"
16 Praise in rhyme
17 High points
19 Aachen article
20 React to reville
22 Part of H.M.S.
23 Encourage
24 Degree, to Emeril
26 Swears it's true
28 Journal
30 Verily
31 Mariachi instrument
35 Tapestry
39 Oodles
40 "— Miserables"
42 Past curfew
43 Roulette bet
44 Annual visitor
46 Carton
47 Fall
49 Speak unclearly
51 Ogling one
52 Makes use of
53 Australian river

- 54 Supermarket lineup

Down

- 1 Tiny apartment
2 Least ferocious
3 Recede
4 Mrs. Fitzgerald
5 Bloodsucker
6 Sovereign power
7 Piece of work
8 Turntable rate (Abbr.)
9 Tools for duels
10 Mama Cass
11 Cut
13 Imparts temporarily
18 Hamm of soccer
21 Brilliance
23 Lustrous gem
25 Ad — committee
27 Afternoon social
29 Exhibition area
31 Mail components
32 Unga residents
33 Cager nickname "Worm"
34 Neptune's realm
36 VW model
37 Coral formations (Abbr.)
38 Male and female
41 Poison dogwood
44 Ball of yarn
45 Capital of Fiji
48 Kinsman
50 Scratch

Answer to Previous Puzzle

D	U	C	K	S	P	H	D	D	E	B
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P	E	A	L	E	T	T	R	U	M	P
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P	I	C	C	O	L	O		N	A	M
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L	E	Y		M	E	T		L	E	A

1-8

CRYPTOQUIP

MG GSN TVA, ANQMVFN UN
YOLN GSN QYMFFOQ
FHRZUJOGNJ, UN MYY

IJMRL M QHYI THJGNJ.
Yesterday's Cryptoquip: IF AN ACTOR IS ELIMINATED FROM A FILM'S CAST, I SUPPOSE HE'S OUT OF THE PICTURE.

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: F equals S

Some men aren't marrying type

Dear Abby: I have been dating a very special man named "Josh" for three years. He has had only one long-term relationship, which produced two children.

My problem is Josh does not believe in marriage. I do not believe in living with someone, and I do believe in marriage.

I have asked Josh for a commitment on several occasions, and I always get a negative response. Am I being strong alone, and what should I do?

—**Downhearted in Ohio**
Dear Downhearted: You're not being strong alone. Josh has been honest with you—he's not interested in marriage. In order for a marriage to happen, both parties must want to make a commitment. The fact that he has fathered not one, but two children and didn't marry the mother should be a clue. He's not the marrying kind. If marriage is important to you, end this romance and find a

partner whose goals are similar to your own. You already have devoted more time to this campaign than you should have.

Dear Abby: I have a 2-year-old son who is scared to death of getting his hair cut. In the past, I have done it with electric clippers on the advice of my wife's hairstylist. Hearing a small child cry and scream is the worst experience in the world. I got so upset the last time that I told my wife I refuse to cut his hair again, because it is so hard on both of us. I suggested we wait until he is older to take him to the barber.

My wife insists that I cut his hair because it is "plucking on her nerves." I feel it's too soon and not worth the terror he goes through. Should I stand my ground, or am I too soft-hearted?

—**Worried Dad in Mississippi**
Dear Dad: Take your son to a hairdresser who is used to work-

ing with children. If necessary, hold the child on your lap while the stylist works his or her "magic." It may take a little extra time, plus a dose of distraction and child psychology, but the experience needn't be traumatic for anyone—including you.

Dear Abby: I was invited to my high school reunion, and I really want to go—but I didn't graduate with my class. What is the proper thing to do? Should I go or just stay home?

—**Wants to Go in California**
Dear Wants to Go: The invitation said "reunion." It's not a review of who graduated with the class and who didn't. Since you were invited, and you'd like to see your old classmates, accept the invitation and go. I'm sure they'll be glad to see you as you are to see them.

Letters for this column—with your name and phone number—should be addressed to Dear Abby, P.O. Box 69404, Los Angeles, CA 90069. Readers can write to Abby on the Internet at <http://www.uxpress.com/dearabby>. Universal Press Syndicate

JUMBLE

Unscramble these four Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

PLUJE

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OPTIA

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CYOUTH

www.jumble.com

Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

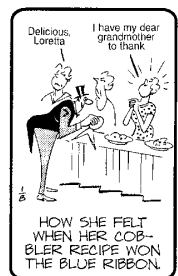
Ans:

(Answers Monday)

Yesterday's Jumbles: UNWED FLORA UPLIFT BANTER
Answer: The furniture salesman was hired because he was — TOP "DRAWER"

THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME

by Henri Arnold and Mike Argirion



Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

Having kids choice, not obligation

Dear Annie: I read the letter from "Child-Free by Choice." I am 50 years old and never had the slightest desire to have children. My aunt once told me that I was selfish not to provide my mother with grandchildren. Here's what I consider selfish:

1. Women who have children they can't afford and expect the rest of us to pay for them.
2. Women who have children while married to, or involved with, men who abuse them. These men are highly likely to abuse the children, too.
3. People who have children hoping to save a failing relationship.
4. People who keep having children because they are trying for a particular sex.
5. Alcoholics and drug addicts who continue to drink and do drugs while pregnant, knowing

the effects it could have on the child. I'm glad some of us realize we are not parent material.

—**Child-Free and Happy**
Dear Child-Free: You aren't the only one who thought so. Read on.

From Connecticut: I'm 38, my husband is 43, and we've been married five years. Neither of us has a burning need to reproduce. Two years before our wedding, my husband noticed a couple in their mid-40s, enjoying themselves on a docked boat. The name of the boat? "Instead of Kids." That did it for us.

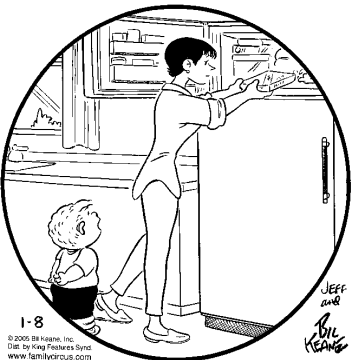
East Coast: I was married at 18, had my first child at 19, and my third at 25. When I asked to have a tubal ligation, I was told, "You're too young. Wait until you're 30." On my 30th birthday, I asked again to have the surgery and was told to wait three more

years. All this time, I've been taking either birth control pills or injections that put me at risk for blood clots and stroke, and have kept my weight and blood pressure up, just to keep me from having that extra kid I don't want. I love the children I have, I just don't want any more.

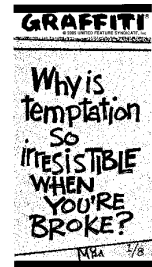
Midwest: I'm 41 years old, married 11 years. I have no urge to put on excess weight, throw up in the morning, have swollen ankles and go through hours of labor. I believe people are jealous that I have a higher standard of living and a more carefree lifestyle. I come and go as I please. I buy whatever I want or need. They, on the other hand, have to plan their life around the needs and wants of their children.

Annie's Mailbox is written by Kathy Mitchell and Marcy Sugar, longtime editors of *Annie's Mailbox*. Please e-mail your questions to anniesmailbox@comcast.net, or write to: Annie's Mailbox, c/o Creators Syndicate, 5777 W. Century Blvd., Suite 700, Los Angeles, CA 90045. Creators Syndicate

Family Circus



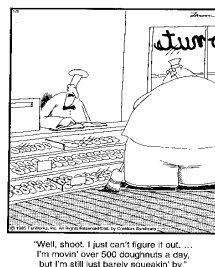
“Can we have something new and improved for dinner?”



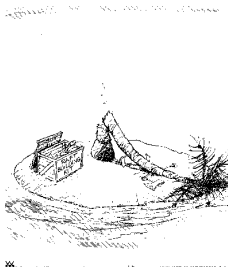
Domis the Menace



The Far Side



Non Sequitur



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Singh back in form with early Mercedes lead

BY DOUG FERGUSON

The Associated Press

KAPALUA, Hawaii — No one is ever sure what the first round of the PGA Tour season will bring, so Vijay Singh just wanted to make sure he finished under par and kept within range of the leaders.

After making seven birdies and missing a half-dozen other good chances, Singh wound up with a 66 at the Mercedes Championships and had a one-shot lead over Craig Parry.

A new season brought a familiar name to the top of the leader board Thursday at Kapalua. It was an early statement from the 41-year-old Fijian that he might have yet another chapter to write in his amazing career.

"That's the way he's been playing," Tiger Woods said after a 68. "It's a continuation of it."

Singh had said he wanted to get off to a strong start, especially coming off a season in which he won nine times and shattered the PGA Tour earnings record with nearly \$11 million. He said he wanted to stake his ground, and remind the rest of his peers that he's still the man to beat.

But in another sign that his game is quickly rounding into form, Woods hit his driver on just about every hole and was in the short grass most of the time. A year ago, his opening tee shot sailed so far to the right on the expansive fairways of the Plantation Course that it also disappeared into waist-high weeds.

He missed the fairway again this year — but only because it was so long (367 yards) and straight that it ran through the fairway and down a slope of thick rough. Solid from tee-to-green, Woods suffered the same problem as just about everyone at Kapalua.

The course is so lush that extra grass means extra grain on the greens, and that makes it difficult to judge the proper pace and the right line. He missed eight birdie putts inside 18 feet.

"I've never seen them like this before, where they're this slow and this grainy," Woods said. "If you look at that leader board, you can see the guys aren't making a bunch of putts, but theirs are really no wind out there and the greens are soft. You would expect at least four or five guys to be 7 under par or better."

"But it's not going to happen with greens like this. It's just too hard to make putts."

There's still three days to see if he's right, but the leader board did seem to indicate that scoring wasn't that easy.

Parry was one of three players on the PGA Tour who didn't have a three-putt last year, but he took three whacks on the par-5 15th and had to settle for par, slowing his rise up the leader board. He finished with a 15-foot birdie and was at 67.

Sergio Garcia, Stewart Cink and Jonathan Kaye joined Woods at 68. Eight players were another shot behind, including Ernie Els, Steve Flesch, Chad Campbell and Adam Scott.

"Like everyone else, probably a little struggling on the greens because of the strength of grain," Flesch said. "The greens roll great, but it's just a very grass that we are not accustomed to much."

What everyone is accustomed to seeing is Singh's name atop the leader board.

He missed a 12-foot putt on the par-5 ninth and made the turn at 2 under, four shots out of the lead. Then came a sand wedge into 6 feet for birdie, and an 8-iron into 4 feet for birdie, and another sand wedge to 6 feet for birdie.

Woods also was making a move and was tied for Singh along the back nine, but he kept putting the ball in tough spots on the green, even though the length was rarely more than 15 feet.

"It's only the first day," Singh said. "You can't be too concerned about the leader board. At the same time, you make sure you keep up the pace."



Vijay Singh hits out of the practice-green sand trap before starting the Mercedes Championships on Thursday in Maui, Hawaii. The tournament marks the start of the PGA season. Singh picked up where he left off last year, taking the first round lead with a 66.

With no progress to report, NHL cancels meeting

The Associated Press

NEW YORK — After labor negotiations broke down last month, there was nothing left for the NHL and the players' association to talk about.

Now the league doesn't even have any news to share with its board of governors.

A meeting scheduled for next week between Commissioner Gary Bettman and executives from all 30 teams was called off Thursday because the planned update session proved to be pointless.

"Since there has been no progress since we scheduled it, it's not surprising that we chose to cancel it," NHL chief legal officer Bill Daly told The Associated Press on Thursday night.

Owners and players haven't sat down at the bargaining table since last month, when the sides met twice within six days.

"There was clearly a hope, if not an expectation, that we'd be doing a lot along this way," Daly said. "We were hopeful that progress could continue to be made, that hopefully the union would come forward with a new proposal."

"I think that is appropriate given the fact that they rejected our counterproposal after only a

Sports briefs

matter of hours of consideration. The fact that they didn't is unfortunate."

The board of governors hasn't met since September, when Bettman imposed the lockout that reached its 113th day on Thursday and has forced the cancellation of 571 regular-season games and the 2005 All-Star Game.

There was speculation that Bettman might emerge from next Friday's scheduled meeting either with an announcement that this season had been called off, or with a final date for saving the season.

"We're not going to be a drop in the bucket," Daly said. "We believe the only important thing is a negotiated agreement that will work for the sport and the industry long term."

"When we're past the point of no return, I think an appropriate announcement will be made. But we're not going to give that announcement in advance."

There were also rumors that the NHL might have come up with a new proposal that it wanted to run by the board of governors before presenting it to the players. Daly dispelled that notion.

No North American sports league has lost an entire season to a labor dispute, but the NHL is moving dangerously close to becoming the first.

If the season is wiped out, it would mark the first time in 86 years that the Stanley Cup wasn't awarded. A flu epidemic canceled the 1919 final series between Montreal and Seattle.

New Mexico State coach Henson hospitalized

LAS CRUCES, N.M. — New Mexico State coach Lou Henson was hospitalized Thursday with pneumonia and he won't return to the sideline this weekend in a wheelchair, as planned.

Henson, stricken in September with viral encephalitis, was scheduled to coach for the first time this season on Saturday night when New Mexico State hosts North Texas.

"We expect him to make a full recovery, but he's obviously not coming on the bench this weekend," school spokesman Sean Johnson said Thursday.

Henson, who will turn 73 on Monday, was to attend practice on Thursday afternoon but became ill and went to a Las Cruces hospital, Johnson said.

Henson is 21 wins short of becoming only the fifth Division I coach with 800 career victories.

The viral encephalitis — an acute inflammatory disease of the brain — caused paralysis in his right leg. He's still unable to walk on his own because he has only slight movement in that leg.

UConn rings stolen from Aueriema's car

HARTFORD, Conn. — Connecticut women's basketball coach Geno Aueriema is without four stolen national championship rings even though a suspected buyer was arrested Thursday.

Police said two teenagers took the rings Nov. 28 and sold them for \$150. Authorities say the rings are worth about \$800 each.

Aueriema said he had the rings in his briefcase for a university photo shoot. He left the briefcase in his car, parked in a Manchester commuter lot while he went to dinner, police said.

The teens, 13 and 15, broke into several cars in the lot that night.

Police arrested the teens last month after police reported seeing the boys wearing the rings.

Investigators didn't announce the theft until Thursday, when they arrested Javier Lugo of East Hartford on charges of larceny and risk of injury to the juveniles. Lugo was arraigned Thursday and was being held on \$20,000 bail. He is due back in court Feb. 9.

Dent upsets top seed Hewitt

ADELAIDE, Australia — American Taylor Dent upset top-seeded Lleyton Hewitt 7-6 (3), 5-7, 6-2 Friday in the quarterfinals at the Australian men's hardcourt tennis championships.

The fifth-seeded Dent will play Argentina's Juan Ignacio Chela in the semifinals Saturday. The fourth-seeded Chela beat Austrian Jurgen Melzer 7-6 (3), 5-7, 6-2.

Earlier, Sweden's Joachim Johansson beat countryman Thomas Enqvist 6-3, 4-6, 6-1 to advance to the other semifinal. Johansson will face Olivier Rochus of Belgium, who beat third-seeded Nicolas Kiefer of Germany 6-7 (4), 7-6 (6), 7-5.

Clijsters to miss Australian

MELBOURNE, Australia — Kim Clijsters will not play in the Australian Open because of an ongoing left wrist injury.

Clijsters, who lost to fellow Belgian Justine Henin-Hardenne in the finals of last year's Australian Open, had not entered the tournament, which begins Jan. 17. The 21-year-old former world No. 1 would have had to rely on a wild card to play.

Clijsters was limited to just 22 matches last season because of the wrist.

Depleted Duke still finding ways to pull out victories

Key injuries aren't slowing No. 5 Blue Devils

BY KEITH PARSONS
The Associated Press

DURHAM, N.C. — DeMarcus Nelson came to Duke as a can't-miss backcourt prospect, the career scoring leader in California prep history.

About a third of the way through his first season with the Blue Devils, the 6-foot-3 Nelson gets most of his playing time at power forward, where he often goes against players 5 or 6 inches taller.

"I never expected to do that, that's for sure," Nelson said.

Blue Devils coach Mike Krzyzewski has no choice. With forwards Shavlik Randolph (mono-nucleosis) and Reggie Love (broken foot) out for the next few weeks, someone needs to help center Shelden Williams in the paint.

Junior Lee Melchioni got his first start Wednesday night against Princeton, and Nelson and former walk-on Patrick Johnson were the only other options. Thanks to some attrition in the offseason, fifth-ranked Duke started with only eight recruited players anyway, leaving very little margin for injuries.

Yet that's exactly what has happened, even if Coach K isn't complaining.

"We have some injuries, but

come on, we're playing basketball," he said. "If we make excuses because of injuries, we're complete idiots. Hey, this is the hand we got, so let's play it."

So far, so good. The Blue Devils are 10-0 for the fourth time in the past five seasons, including victories over Michigan State and Oklahoma. After playing Temple on Saturday, they get into the bulk of their Atlantic Coast Conference schedule next week with a trip to North Carolina State.

That's the first of 13 straight league games.

"Our team right now is coming together tremendously, and when Shav and Reggie come back, we'll have other guys with game experience, and we'll be a force to reckon with," Melchioni said.

Despite the confidence shown by Krzyzewski and Melchioni, the Blue Devils do have some problems. In back-to-back victories over Clemson and Princeton, they averaged only 61 points, down from about 85 in the first eight games.

The style of play in the past two clearly has been methodical and dictated mostly by the opponent, but Duke still has shot only 37 percent. J.J. Redick scored 21 points against Princeton — on three baskets and a 14-for-14 effort at the free throw line — and he was the

only player in double figures for the Blue Devils.

"I think it's important for us to come out and play better offense on Saturday," Redick said. "It'd be great for us to get it going."

They need players such as Nelson and Melchioni to step in and perform up to the level of the others, something Nelson gave glimpses of Wednesday night.

When the Tigers closed within seven early in the second half, he stepped outside and made a three-pointer, then added a steal and a dunk to boost Duke's lead back to 13.

Nelson finished with seven points and nine rebounds.

"Unfortunately, our numbers are going down, and players are getting hurt," he said. "For me individually, it's an opportunity for me to help our team win and to keep this train rolling."

"Having this responsibility on my shoulders is something I've always looked forward to, something I've always had playing basketball."

Nelson's attitude is exactly what Krzyzewski wants to see from his players.

"You don't become a winning team by rationalizing and making excuses," he said. "You become a winner by defeating rationalization and having no excuses. That's the way we're going to run our program."



Duke head coach Mike Krzyzewski examines Reggie Love's foot after he broke it last week. Injuries have plagued No. 5 Duke this season.

Zags open title defense with win over Santa Clara

The Associated Press

SANTA CLARA, Calif. — Derek Raivio is glad he prepared himself in the pre-season for the point guards of the West Coast Conference by facing Oklahoma State's John Lucas, Georgia Tech's Jarrett Jack and Dee Brown of top-ranked Illinois.

Gonzaga's star sophomore might just be establishing himself as one of the country's elite at his position.

Raivio scored a career-high 32 points, made six three-pointers and hit all 10 of his free throws, and the 11th-ranked Bulldogs opened defense of their West Coast Conference title with a heated 91-87 victory over Santa Clara on Thursday night.

"Playing against all the top guards in the nation has been a great experience," Raivio said. "It got me prepared for whoever comes at me because I've already played against the best."

Adam Morrison added 18 points and Errol Knight had 11 points and eight rebounds in the first game for the Zags (11-2) since they had their seven-game winning streak snapped with a 63-61 loss to Missouri on Dec. 30.

They sent the Broncos to their fifth straight loss. Gonzaga has won nine in a row in the series and the last five at the Leavey Center, where Santa Clara's students packed the sold-out arena more than an hour before game time to taunt the visitors during warmups.



Gonzaga's Errol Knight (22) drives to the basket as Santa Clara's Sean Denison (15) defends in the first half on Thursday.

Doron Perkins scored 18 of his 22 points in the first half for Santa Clara (7-9), but went cold after halftime. He scored nine straight — with a four-point play and a three-pointer — to almost single-handedly get the Broncos back in the game after they fell behind by 15. He also had nine re-

bounds and four steals, and drew the assignment of defending Morrison, who at 6-foot-8 has a 6-inch height advantage.

"I feel like every time the win is right there and they take it away," Santa Clara's Kyle Bailey said of playing the Zags. "I'll get it figured out. I'd hate to come back for a sixth year just to beat them."

No. 9 Gonzaga Tech 80, Miami 69: At Atlanta, Will Bynum scored 21 points and Georgia Tech ruined Miami's Atlantic Coast Conference debut.

The Yellow Jackets (10-2, 1-0) bounced back from an overtime loss at No. 2 Kansas, a game in which second-leading scorer B.J. Elder injured a hamstring that could keep him out through this weekend.

Luke Schenscher added 15 points for Georgia Tech, while Jarrett Jack had 14 points and nine rebounds.

Guillermo Diaz had 27 points for the Hurricanes (9-3, 0-1), who moved from the Big East to the ACC this season. They had an eight-game winning streak snapped.

No. 12 Washington 94, Southern California 59: At Los Angeles, Tre Simmons scored 22 points and the Huskies won their ninth straight. Washington (13-1, 3-0 Pac-10) is off to its best start since 1982 when it won 10 in a row.

Freshman Nick Young scored 18 of his 20 points in the second half for the Trojans (7-7), who have yet to win a Pac-10 game under interim coach Jim Saia. The 0-3 mark is their worst conference start since

they began 0-4 in 1991, but still made the NCAA tournament.

No. 13 Arizona 87, California 67: Channing Frye had 20 points and eight rebounds to lead the visiting Wildcats to their ninth straight victory.

Hassan Adams added 16 points and Ivan Radenovic had 14 points and seven rebounds for Arizona (12-2, 2-0 Pac-10), which beat the Bears for the 11th time in the last 12 meetings.

Richard Midgley scored 14 points to lead California (8-5, 1-2).

No. 15 Texas 74, Memphis 67: P.J. Tucker scored 18 points, four in the final 42 seconds, to lead the host Longhorns (11-2). He had a fastbreak dunk after a turnover to make it 71-67, and then added two free throws with 17 seconds left.

Freshman Darius Washington had 23 points for the Tigers (7-7), who have lost five of seven.

No. 23 Cincinnati 83, DePaul 54: At Cincinnati, Jason Maxiell scored 19 points for the Bearcats, who have won 26 of 29 over DePaul, including 14 straight on the Bearcats' home court.

Armeen Kirkland had 18 points for Cincinnati (12-1, 0-1 Conference USA).

Quemont Greer, who leads the conference in scoring at 24.1 points per game, had 12 on 4-of-13 shooting for the Blue Demons (8-4, 0-1). That ended his school-record streak of eight consecutive games with at least 20 points.

Top 25
roundup

Fashion statement: Kobe's jersey out of style

Sales plummet for Lakers' star after trial, team breakup

BY RUKMINI CALLIMACHI
The Associated Press

PORTLAND, Ore. — Kobe Bryant is no longer a fashion icon.

For the last month, Bryant's No. 8 Lakers jersey — previously one of the best sellers in the world — has fallen out of the top 50, according to point-of-sale data tabulated by a Florida market research firm.

Bryant's NBA jersey was still the 10th highest-selling jersey for the year, but he finished the month of December at No. 72 — and in one week plunged to No. 90, a drastic slide for the player many once saw as the sport's next marketing golden boy.

"I would never have thought it would have dropped off like this," said Neil Schwartz, director of marketing and business development for SportsScanINFO in West Palm Beach, which tracks weekly sales data from sporting goods retailers nationwide.

Bryant's marketability has likely been hurt by the flurry of bad press he's been receiving lately, analysts say. It began with his rape case and included his feud with former teammate Shaquille O'Neal, his spat



For the last month, Kobe Bryant's Los Angeles Lakers jersey, previously one of the top-selling NBA jerseys worldwide, has fallen out of the top 50.

with current teammate Paul Malone and a new book by former coach Phil Jackson that portrays Bryant as an aloof prima donna.

Before the season started, O'Neal was traded to the Miami Heat and Jackson retired — departures that many fans have

blamed on Bryant.

"I was a big fan, but I just can't wear his jersey anymore," said Patrick Buan, 27, of Victorville, Calif., who last month put up for sale his four Bryant jerseys on eBay.

Bryant's agent, Bob Finkelstein, did not return calls seeking comment. Nike Inc., Bryant's main sponsor, also declined to comment, saying only that the company remains under contract with the Bryant.

Officials at AEG, which owns the Staples Center, said sales of Bryant's jersey have dipped noticeably at the store in the arena in recent weeks. They said the problem began early this summer as Bryant prepared to face criminal rape charges which were later dropped after his accuser said she did not want to participate in the trial.

But the manufacturer got skittish while the rape case was pending, said Alan Fey, vice president of merchandising for AEG. "He's such a significant player that [they] weren't willing to make all those goods and have him go to jail," he said.

Officials at Reebok Inc., the company which manufactures the jersey, did not return repeated calls Thursday.

Schwartz said Bryant's legal troubles could account for a drop in sales in the summer and possibly the beginning of the season — but not in December.

In June — when the preparations for Bryant's rape trial were going full tilt — Bryant jerseys hovered in the top five in terms of NBA jerseys sold, including time at the No. 1 spot, according to Schwartz,

whose company tallies numbers from a wide range of retailers.

Industry insiders say that while fans may have been willing to look the other way during the rape scandal, they seem far less willing to forgive him now for what they see as the breakup of a championship team.

"I think a lot of people were understanding of the rape trial, because there are a lot of cases of players being entrapped," said Bob Dorfman, executive vice president of Pickett Advertising in San Francisco. "But it's all about winning — that's what basketball is. When he jeopardized the team by single-handedly blowing apart the team, it was the final straw for a lot of people."

The drop in sales is being felt in a wide variety of retail venues, from small sporting goods chains to the Lakers' memorabilia hub at Staples Center.

"Kobe's jersey was a core part of our business — and now with the team going in the direction it has, we've ordered less and seen less of a demand," said Mike Batt, general manager of Fanz in Salt Lake City, a sporting goods retail chain with 32 stores. The drop in sales is bad news for Nike Inc., which sank a reported \$40 million into a multiyear contract with Bryant.

Thile Nike does not make his jersey — Massachusetts' state legislature recently bought the licensing rights to all NBA player jerseys from Nike — the decline is further evidence that they may not see a return on the investment.

While both McDonald's and Nutella have since dropped him, Nike has stood by Bryant, but has yet to use him in a single ad, even in ones touting Bryant's own shoe.

Hamilton leads team without scoring FG

BY LARRY LAGE

The Associated Press

AUBURN HILLS, Mich. — Richard Hamilton is considered to be one of the best mid-range shooters in the NBA.

The Detroit Pistons shooting guard's misfiring on Thursday night earned him recognition like no other.

Hamilton became the first player in NBA history to lead his team in scoring without making a field goal, according to the Elias Sports Bureau. He went 0-for-10 from the floor but still paced Detroit with 14 points in the Pistons' 101-79 loss to the Memphis Grizzlies.

"It was just one of those nights when I said Hamilton, who made all 14 of his free throws."

Bonzi Wells spoiled the strange night for Hamilton of the Pistons as he scored 23 points to lead Memphis to victory.

Hamilton, Detroit's leading scorer, wasn't the only Pistons player to struggle against the surging Grizzlies. Memphis held the defending NBA champions to 31.3 percent shooting, forced 23 turnovers and blocked 15 shots.

"He's extremely, very, very active," Grizzlies coach Mike Fratello said.

The Pistons were very lethargic, drawing the ire of their coach — again.

"I never thought I would have to coach effort," Larry Brown said. "I've never had to do that in my entire life, and this is the last group that I expected to have to do with."

Roundup



"Maybe a game like this will make me recognize how bad I is." Though the Pistons (17-14) have played uninspired basketball for much of the season, they had won five of six and are only one game off last season's pace.

Memphis (17-17) reached .500 for the first time this season by extending their season-high winning streak to five games. The Grizzlies were 5-11 when they hired Fratello on Dec. 2 to replace the retired Hubie Brown.

Wizards 107, SuperSonics 96: At Washington, the Wizards made the most of their first national TV appearance in 20 months.

Gilbert Arenas scored 27 points and Larry Hughes had 21 to lead six players in double figures as the Wizards improved to 5-5 against Western Conference teams.

Spurs 111, Pacers 98: At San Antonio, Tim Duncan scored 27 points and Tony Parker had 26, leading San Antonio past Indiana.

Manu Ginobili added 18 points, and Duncan grabbed 12 rebounds for San Antonio, which improved to 8-0 at home against Eastern Conference teams and 16-1 overall at the SBC Center. The Spurs ended the seventh double-digit victory in eight games.

NBA scoreboard

Eastern Conference

Atlantic Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
New York	19	10	.656	
Philadelphia	15	16	.484	1 1/2
Boston	15	17	.468	1 1/2
Toronto	12	24	.333	4 1/2
New Jersey	11	29	.275	5 1/2

Southwest Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Miami	26	8	.765	
Washington	25	9	.735	
Orlando	16	18	.471	5 1/2
Houston	14	20	.412	7 1/2
Atlanta	5	25	.167	19 1/2

Central Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Cleveland	29	12	.707	
Indiana	17	14	.548	2
Chicago	16	15	.515	2 1/2
Detroit	11	18	.379	7
Milwaukee	10	19	.345	8

Western Conference

Southwest Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
San Antonio	27	7	.794	
Oklahoma City	27	8	.771	
Memphis	17	10	.500	10
Portland	16	15	.515	11
New Orleans	10	20	.333	16 1/2

Northwest Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Seattle	29	12	.707	
Minnesota	16	15	.515	6 1/2
Portland	14	18	.438	9
Denver	14	18	.438	9
Utah	10	22	.310	13 1/2

Pacific Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Phoenix	28	8	.775	
Denver	24	12	.667	
Los Angeles	16	13	.556	11
L.A. Lakers	14	15	.481	13 1/2
Sacramento	11	21	.344	17 1/2

Thursday's Games

	W	L	Pct	GB
Washington 107, Seattle 96				
Memphis 107, Detroit 79				
San Antonio 111, Indiana 98				

Friday's Games

	W	L	Pct	GB
Milwaukee at Toronto				
Charlotte at Orlando				
Detroit at Boston				
Sacramento at Atlanta				
San Antonio at New Jersey				
New Orleans at Memphis				
Atlanta at Minnesota				
Utah at Chicago				

Saturday's Games

	W	L	Pct	GB
Washington 107, Seattle 96				
Memphis 107, Detroit 79				
San Antonio 111, Indiana 98				

Sunday's Games

	W	L	Pct	GB
Phoenix at Portland				
Los Angeles at Houston				
San Antonio at Cleveland				
Portland at Washington				
New Jersey at Orlando				
San Antonio at New Orleans				
Atlanta at Chicago				
Indiana at Dallas				
Phoenix at L.A. Clippers				

Monday's Games

	W	L	Pct	GB
Golden State at Toronto				
Portland at New York				
San Antonio at Phoenix				
Houston at Denver				

Thursday

Wizards 107, SuperSonics 96

	W	L	Pct	GB
Seattle	29	12	.707	
Minnesota	16	15	.515	6 1/2
Portland	14	18	.438	9
Denver	14	18	.438	9
Utah	10	22	.310	13 1/2

Friday's Games

	W	L	Pct	GB
Washington 107, Seattle 96				
Memphis 107, Detroit 79				
San Antonio 111, Indiana 98				

Saturday's Games

	W	L	Pct	GB
Phoenix at Portland				
Los Angeles at Houston				
San Antonio at Cleveland				
Portland at Washington				
New Jersey at Orlando				
San Antonio at New Orleans				
Atlanta at Chicago				
Indiana at Dallas				
Phoenix at L.A. Clippers				

Monday's Games

	W	L	Pct	GB
Golden State at Toronto				
Portland at New York				
San Antonio at Phoenix				
Houston at Denver				

Tuesday's Games

	W	L	Pct	GB
Phoenix at Portland				
Los Angeles at Houston				
San Antonio at Cleveland				
Portland at Washington				
New Jersey at Orlando				
San Antonio at New Orleans				
Atlanta at Chicago				
Indiana at Dallas				
Phoenix at L.A. Clippers				

Wednesday's Games

	W	L	Pct	GB
Golden State at Toronto				
Portland at New York				
San Antonio at Phoenix				
Houston at Denver				

Thursday's Games

	W	L	Pct	GB
Washington 107, Seattle 96				
Memphis 107, Detroit 79				
San Antonio 111, Indiana 98				

Friday's Games

	W	L	Pct	GB
Milwaukee at Toronto				
Charlotte at Orlando				
Detroit at Boston				
Sacramento at Atlanta				
San Antonio at New Jersey				
New Orleans at Memphis				
Atlanta at Minnesota				
Utah at Chicago				

Saturday's Games

	W	L	Pct	GB
Phoenix at Portland				
Los Angeles at Houston				
San Antonio at Cleveland				
Portland at Washington				
New Jersey at Orlando				
San Antonio at New Orleans				
Atlanta at Chicago				
Indiana at Dallas				
Phoenix at L.A. Clippers				

Sunday's Games

	W	L	Pct	GB
Golden State at Toronto				
Portland at New York				
San Antonio at Phoenix				
Houston at Denver				

Monday's Games

	W	L	Pct	GB
Phoenix at Portland				
Los Angeles at Houston				
San Antonio at Cleveland				
Portland at Washington				
New Jersey at Orlando				
San Antonio at New Orleans				
Atlanta at Chicago				
Indiana at Dallas				
Phoenix at L.A. Clippers				

Tuesday's Games

	W	L	Pct	GB
Golden State at Toronto				
Portland at New York				
San Antonio at Phoenix				
Houston at Denver				

Lawyers seek media queries in Bryant case

The Associated Press

DENVER — Attorneys for the woman who accused Kobe Bryant of rape say his defense team is requesting to interview news media organizations that covered the case for the sole purpose of delaying her civil trial.

The woman's lawyers said Thursday that Bryant's defense team wants to interview "numerous nonparties" in the case, which will cause significant delays and cost the woman tens of thousands of dollars in legal expenses.

The court filing came in response to Bryant's attorneys who others were at last partly responsible for emotional injuries the woman allegedly suffered since her encounter with Bryant in a Vail-area hotel in June 2003.

Bryant's attorneys have argued the woman's alleged injuries may have been caused by numerous media organizations that published information about the case.

Divac has back surgery
EL SEGUNDO, Calif. — Los Angeles Lakers center Vlade Divac underwent surgery to repair a herniated disc Thursday and is expected to return three months later.

Divac originally hurt his back during a workout before training camp and was on the injured list from Dec. 2-23. He missed his back three weeks ago and was placed on the injured list Dec. 22.

Sexant news back

1B Mientkiewicz has had baseball since final out

The Associated Press

BOSTON — Red Sox fans have seen the video over and over again. A ground ball to pitcher Keith Foulke. He tosses it underhand to backup first baseman Doug Mientkiewicz, who raises it high as Boston celebrates its first World Series championship in 86 years.

Mientkiewicz still hasn't let go of the ball. But now the Red Sox want it back.

Calling the ball, "my retirement fund," Mientkiewicz stored it in a safe deposit box. Red Sox CEO Larry Lucchino said Thursday he's going to ask Mientkiewicz to return it to the team.

"We want it to be part of Red Sox archives or museums so it can be shared with the fans," Lucchino told The Boston Globe. "We would hope he would understand the historical nature of this."

Mientkiewicz seems to understand it very well, which is exactly why he held on to it.

Historic baseballs have recently fished impressive sums. The baseball Red Sox catcher Carlton Fisk batted off the foul pole in

the 1975 World Series sold for \$113,373. The ball Barry Bonds hit with his 73rd home run went for \$450,000. The most expensive baseball so far is Mark McGwire's 70th homer, which went for \$3 million.

Mientkiewicz said he thinks the Boston World Series ball has more value than a home run ball.

"Those are important and all, don't get me wrong, but there are always going to be more home runs," he said. "This is something that took 86 years, and 86 years is a long time. Personally, I went through hell and back this year. But winning the World Series is something I'm going to remember for a long time."

Mientkiewicz came to Boston from Minnesota in the three-team midseason deal that sent Boston slugger Jose Canseco to the Chicago Cubs.

Mientkiewicz, who batted .215 for Boston, was used primarily as a late innings defensive replacement, and the former Gold Glove first baseman has enough of his unhappiness with the role.

Boston broke its championship

drought by beating the New York Yankees in seven games in the American League championship series, then sweeping the St. Louis Cardinals in four games in the World Series.

After the game, Mientkiewicz said he put the ball in his locker, then gave it to his wife, Jodi, who put it in her purse. The next day, the ball was authenticated by Major League Baseball.

Carmine Tiso, spokesman for MLB, told the Globe that Mientkiewicz owns the baseball, though Joe Januszewski, Red Sox director of corporate partnerships, said he thinks the team owns it.

Mientkiewicz couldn't be reached for comment Thursday by the Globe after Lucchino said the club wanted the ball back. But on Wednesday, he left no doubt he believes the ball belongs to him.

"I know this ball has a lot of sentimental value," Mientkiewicz said. "I hope I don't have to pay for the money. It would be cool if we have kids someday to have it stay in our family for a long time. But I can't be bought. I'm thinking that's the only way I can keep it for one of my kids. At least."

Baseball free agent signings

NEW YORK (AP) — The 115 free agents who have signed, with name, position, former club, contract length and salary. Contract information was obtained by The Associated Press from player and agent management sources.

AMERICAN LEAGUE

ANAHIM (4) — Signed Steve Finley, of, Los Angeles, to a \$14 million, two-year contract; signed Jason Varitek, 3B, the Boston Red Sox, to a \$10 million, two-year contract; signed Paul Byrd, 1B, the New York Yankees, to a \$4 million, one-year contract; signed Orlando Cabrera, SS, Boston, to a \$3 million, one-year contract.

BALTIMORE (3) — Re-signed BJ Surhoff, of, to a \$1.1 million, one-year contract; signed Steve Lincecum, 2B, the Seattle Mariners, to a one-year contract; (\$255,000); signed Steve Kline, 1B, St. Louis, to a \$1.5 million, two-year contract.

BOSTON (8) — Re-signed Doug Mirebel, of, to a \$3 million, two-year contract; signed Matt Maletz, 1B, Arizona, to a \$750,000, one-year contract; signed David Wells, SS, San Diego, to an \$8 million, two-year contract; signed Jose Hernandez, 2B, the New York Yankees, to a \$1 million, one-year contract; signed Edgar Chedoke, 2B, to a \$2.5 million, four-year contract; signed Matt Clement, 1B, Chicago Cubs, to a \$2.5 million, three-year contract; re-signed Jason Fiske, 1B, the New York Yankees, to a \$1 million, one-year contract; signed Josie Manzanillo, 1B, Florida, to a \$1 million, one-year contract.

CHICAGO (2) — Signed Dustin Hermanson, 1B, San Francisco, to a \$5.5 million, one-year contract; signed Hernandez, 2B, Oakland, to a \$10.15 million, two-year contract; signed Hernandez, 2B, the New York Yankees, to an \$8 million, two-year contract.

CLEVELAND (2) — Re-signed Bob Wickman, 1B, to a \$7.5 million, one-year contract; signed Nomar Garciaparra, SS, to a \$1.8 million, one-year contract.

DETROIT (4) — Signed Troy Percival, 1B, Oakland, to a \$1.2 million, one-year contract; signed Ramon Martinez, SS, Chicago, to a \$1 million, one-year contract.

KANSAS CITY (2) — Re-signed Kevin Apple, 1B, to a \$1.5 million, one-year contract; signed Jose Lima, 1B, Los Angeles, to a \$2.5 million, one-year contract.

MINNESOTA (4) — Signed Al Castro, 3B, Cincinnati, to a \$2.05 million, two-year contract; signed Jason Kendall, 1B, to a \$1.8 million, two-year contract; re-signed Tim Lincecum, 2B, to a \$1.5 million, two-year contract; re-signed Terry Mulholland, 1B, to a minor league contract (\$750,000).

NEW YORK (2) — Re-signed John Flaherty, of, to an \$800,000, one-year contract; signed Jason Varitek, 3B, to a \$10 million, two-year contract; signed Carl Pavano, 1B, to a \$1.5 million, one-year contract; signed Brian Wright, 1B, Atlanta, to a \$2 million, three-year contract; signed Tim Lincecum, 2B, to a \$1.5 million, two-year contract.

PHILADELPHIA (2) — Re-signed Dan Wilson, of, to a \$1.75 million, one-year contract; signed Greg Maddux, 1B, Arizona, to a four-year contract; signed Adrian Beltré, 3B,

War wounded get glimpse of Series trophy



REBEA CRITZER/Special to Stars and Stripes

Forced to throw down his New York Yankees baseball cap for the photo, John Ruchala (wearing the camouflaged Boston Red Sox cap) laughs with his colleagues from Human Resources Command Lt. Col. Pete Mueller (back left) and Col. Jeff Perry (back right) as Boston Red Sox President and CEO Larry Lucchino (front left) grinds the Yankees cap to the floor Thursday inside the Pentagon. Ruchala said he's a "Yankees fan and a good sport." Lucchino brought the World Series trophy to the Washington area to show recovering veterans at Bethesda Naval Medical Center, Walter Reed Army Medical Center and the Pentagon as an appreciation for the servicemen's sacrifices. The Red Sox won the World Series in October after defeating the Yankees in the American League playoffs.

Diamondbacks, Green fail to reach agreement

The Associated Press

PHOENIX — The Arizona Diamondbacks and Los Angeles Dodgers slugger Shawn Green failed to reach an agreement on a contract extension on Tuesday, and the tentative trade appeared to have fallen through.

A 48-hour window for the Diamondbacks to negotiate with Green expired Thursday, and Dodgers General Manager Paul DePodesta declared the trade in its present form "dead."

Neither Diamondbacks general partner Ken Kendrick nor Green's agent Greg Genske returned telephone calls.

The New York Yankees, meanwhile, reached an agreement on a \$32 million, two-year contract extension for Randy Johnson, a prerequisite to the Big Unit waiving his no-trade clause for a deal to New York.

Arizona is to receive pitchers Javier Vazquez and Brad Halsey along with catching prospect Dion Navarro and \$9 million for Johnson. The Diamondbacks intended to send Navarro and minor league pitcher William Justus to Los Angeles for Green and \$8 million.

Green has a one year and \$16 million remaining on his contract, which includes a no-trade clause. The prospect of his waiving the no-trade clause seemed a contract extension seemed unlikely. Vazquez refused the trade, but it could create an awkward situation for his return to Los Angeles team that had tried in at least

two deals to get rid of him. Green would have been part of the three-team, 10-player trade announced by Dodgers, Diamondbacks and Yankees that fell apart last month.

Astros say they've made final offer to Beltran

HOUSTON — The Houston Astros said Thursday that they've made their final offer to Carlos Beltran. They'll find out this week whether he will agree to join the All-Star center fielder.

"The offer on the table is our final offer," general manager Tim Lincecum said. "We're not interested in going any higher."

Houston faces an 11 p.m. CST Series deadline to re-sign Beltran. After that, under baseball rules the Astros would be allowed to strike a deal with him until May 1.

Boggs to get Red Sox cap on Hall of Fame plaque

COOPERSTOWN, N.Y. — Wade Boggs will have a Boston Red Sox cap on his Hall of Fame plaque.

Boggs, elected to the Hall this week along with Ryne Sandberg, spent the first 11 seasons of his career with Boston, winning five American League batting titles. He played with the New York Yankees from 1993-97, then finished with two seasons for his hometown Tampa Bay Devil Rays.

The Hall picks which cap will appear on a player's bronze plaque. Boggs told the Hall he didn't care which team was selected.

Los Angeles, to a \$64 million, five-year contract; announced Ron Villone, 1B, accepted salary arbitration, signed Poley Reese, SS, Boston, to a \$2.1 million, one-year contract.

TAMPA BAY (1) — Signed Alex Gonzalez, SS, San Diego, to a \$1.75 million, one-year contract.

TEXAS (7) — Re-signed Doug Broccoli, 1B, to a \$1 million, one-year contract; signed Sean Lincecum, 2B, the Boston Red Sox, to a \$550,000, one-year contract; re-signed Nomar Garciaparra, SS, to a \$1.8 million, one-year contract; signed \$385,000; re-signed John Wadsworth, 1B, to a \$2.7 million, two-year contract; signed Greg Colburn, 1B, Arizona, to a minor league contract (\$650,000); re-signed David Wells, SS, San Diego, to a \$8 million, two-year contract.

TORONTO (2) — Re-signed Greg Myers, of, to a minor league contract (\$750,000); signed Corey Kosile, 1B, Minnesota, to a \$17 million, three-year contract; re-signed Gregg Zaun, of, to a \$1.5 million, one-year contract.

NATIONAL LEAGUE
ARIZONA (6) — Re-signed Quinton McCracken, of, to a minor league contract (\$750,000); signed Troy Glavin, 3B, Anaheim, to a \$4.5 million, four-year contract; signed Russ Ortiz, 1B, Atlanta, to a \$33 million, one-year contract; signed Kelly Stinnett, of, Kansas City, to a minor league contract; signed Doug Broccoli, 1B, the Boston Red Sox, to a \$1.5 million, one-year contract; signed Craig Kopp, SS, Milwaukee, to a \$3.1 million, two-year contract.

ATLANTA (4) — Re-signed Julio Franco, 1B, Atlanta, to a \$3.1 million, one-year contract.

CHICAGO (5) — Re-signed glendon Rusch, 1B, to a \$4 million, one-year contract; re-signed Nomar Garciaparra, SS, to a \$1.8 million, one-year contract; re-signed Todd Helton, 1B, Colorado, to a \$2.5 million, one-year contract; signed Tim Lincecum, 2B, to a \$1.5 million, two-year contract; signed Craig Kopp, SS, Milwaukee, to a \$3.1 million, two-year contract.

CINCINNATI (5) — Re-signed Paul Wilson, 1B, to a \$2.1 million, one-year contract; signed David Wells, SS, San Diego, to a \$8 million, two-year contract; signed Eric Milton, 1B, Philadelphia, to a \$2.5 million, one-year contract.

COLORADO (2) — Re-signed Todd Greene, of, to a \$750,000, one-year contract; re-signed Larry Kuebel, 1B, Minnesota, to a \$2.5 million, one-year contract; signed Deshaun Reelford, 2B, Kansas City, to a \$1 million, one-year contract.

FLORIDA (6) — Re-signed Damien Easley, 2B, to a \$750,000, one-year contract; signed Jason Kendall, 1B, to a \$1.8 million, two-year contract; signed \$425,000; signed Al Leiter, 1B, to a \$1.5 million, one-year contract; signed Tim Lincecum, 2B, to a \$1.5 million, two-year contract; signed Tim Lincecum, 2B, to a \$1.5 million, two-year contract.

HOUSTON (4) — Re-signed Jose Vazquez, 1B, to a \$1.5 million, one-year contract; signed \$425,000; signed Al Leiter, 1B, to a \$1.5 million, one-year contract; signed Tim Lincecum, 2B, to a \$1.5 million, two-year contract.

HOUSTON (4) — Re-signed Jose Vazquez, 1B, to a \$1.5 million, one-year contract; signed \$425,000; signed Al Leiter, 1B, to a \$1.5 million, one-year contract; signed Tim Lincecum, 2B, to a \$1.5 million, two-year contract.

LOS ANGELES (2) — Signed Ricky Lede, of, to a \$1.5 million, one-year contract; signed Jeff Kent, 2B, Houston, to a \$1.7 million, two-year contract; signed Willy Alvarez, 1B, to a \$4 million, one-year contract; signed Jose Valentin, 3B, Chicago White Sox, to a \$1 million, one-year contract; signed J.D. Drew, of, Atlanta, to a \$55 million, one-year contract.

MILWAUKEE (1) — Signed Damian Miller, of, Oakland, to an \$8.75 million, three-year contract.

NEW YORK (7) — Re-signed Kris Benson, 1B, to a \$22.5 million, three-year contract; re-signed Mike DeLeon, 1B, to a \$1.15 million, one-year contract; signed Pedro Martinez, 1B, Boston, to a \$3.5 million, four-year contract; signed Andres Galaraga, 1B, Anaheim, to a minor league contract (\$600,000).

PHILADELPHIA (5) — Re-signed Tony Lidle, 1B, to a \$2.3 million, two-year contract; signed Todd Pratt, of, to a \$750,000, one-year contract; signed Nomar Garciaparra, SS, to a \$1.8 million, one-year contract; signed Jason Kendall, 1B, to a \$1.8 million, two-year contract; signed John Wadsworth, 1B, to a \$2.7 million, two-year contract.

ST. LOUIS (2) — Re-signed Cal Eldred, 1B, to a \$600,000, one-year contract; re-signed John Wadsworth, 1B, to a \$2.7 million, two-year contract; signed Mike Morris, 1B, to a \$2.5 million, one-year contract; signed Einar Valdez, 1B, to a \$1.5 million, one-year contract; signed Mike Morris, 1B, to a \$2.5 million, one-year contract; signed Einar Valdez, 1B, to a \$1.5 million, one-year contract.

SAN DIEGO (5) — Signed Rudy Seanez, 1B, Florida, to a \$1.5 million, one-year contract; signed Randy Reyes, 1B, to a \$1.5 million, one-year contract; signed Woody Williams, 1B, to a \$1.5 million, one-year contract; signed Eric Young, of, to a \$1.5 million, one-year contract; signed Mark Sweeney, of, Colorado, to a \$750,000, one-year contract.

SAN FRANCISCO (6) — Signed Omar Vizquel, SS, Cleveland, to a \$12.5 million, three-year contract; signed Armando Benitez, 1B, Florida, to a \$2.5 million, one-year contract; signed Jose Valentin, 3B, St. Louis, to a \$1.5 million, two-year contract; signed Mike Morris, 1B, to a \$2.5 million, one-year contract; signed Einar Valdez, 1B, to a \$1.5 million, one-year contract.

WASHINGTON (2) — Signed Cristian Guzman, SS, Minnesota, to a \$16.8 million, three-year contract; signed Armando Benitez, 1B, to a \$2.5 million, two-year contract; signed Mike Morris, 1B, to a \$2.5 million, one-year contract.

YANKEES CENTRAL LEAGUE
YANKEES (1) — Signed Nomar Garciaparra, 1B, to a one-year contract.

Manning unanimous pick for AP All-Pro Team

BY BARRY WILNER
The Associated Press

NEW YORK — Peyton Manning was unstoppable on the field this season, and in the AP-Pro voting, too.

The record-setting Indianapolis Colts quarterback was a unanimous choice Thursday for The Associated Press 2004 NFL All-Pro Team. Manning received all 49 first-place votes from a nationwide panel of writers and broadcasters who cover pro football, the only player to sweep the voting this year.

After sharing the MVP award with Steve McNair last year, Manning reached a new level in '04.

"Last year was fun," Manning said. "This year was more fun because the things we wanted to do, we came out, worked on them and got them done."

Manning broke Dan Marino's 20-year-old record for touchdown passes in a season with 49, and shattered Steve Young's passer rating mark with a 121.1. Indeed, he would have had to go 0-for-20 with five interceptions in the final game to not break the record.

Manning also was the AP-Pro quarterback in 2003, when he was the co-MVP with McNair of Tennessee. The AP Most Valuable Player will be announced on Monday.

Surprisingly, despite the Colts' prolific offense, Manning was their only All-Pro on that side of the ball. Defensive end Dwight

Freeney, the NFL sacks leader with 16, made it on defense.

The AFC's dominance this season was evident on the All-Pro team, with 19 players from that conference and just 10 from the NFC.

Pittsburgh, with a 15-1 regular-season mark, had the most AFC players: guard Alan Faneca, center Jeff Hartings and inside linebacker James Farrior. Faneca made it for the third time, Hartings and Farrior were among 17 first-time All-Pro.

Philadelphia also had three members: wide receiver Terrell Owens, making it for the fourth time; safety Brian Dawkins (third time) and cornerback Lito Sheppard (first).

Although Minnesota's defense struggled this season, it had a prime player in tackle Kevin Williams, also a new All-Pro.

"He's just an elite player," Vikings coach Mike Tice said. "Kevin makes a lot of plays, and in big games he seems to play better."

Also among players making an All-Pro debut was 31-year-old Curtis Martin, who won his first rushing title this season. Martin, of the New York Jets, has rushed for at least 1,000 yards in all 10 of his NFL seasons, tying the record of Hall of Famer Barry Sanders.

He was joined in the backfield by LaDainian Tomlinson of San Diego, also a first-time. So was Tomlinson's teammate, tight end Antonio Gates, a 2003 undrafted

Manning tops All-Pro Team

Peyton Manning was the only player to sweep The Associated Press 2004 NFL All-Pro Team voting this year, Manning threw for 49 touchdowns, breaking Dan Marino's record, and had a passer rating of 121.1.

Offense

Wide Receivers

Terrell Owens, Philadelphia;
Muhsin Muhammad, Carolina

Tackles

Walter Jones, Seattle; Willie Anderson, Cincinnati; William Roaf, Kansas City

Guards

Alan Faneca, Pittsburgh; Brian Waters, Kansas City

Center

Jeff Hartings, Pittsburgh

Tight End

Antonio Gates, San Diego

Quarterback

Peyton Manning, Indianapolis

Running Backs

Curtis Martin, NY Jets; LaDainian Tomlinson, San Diego

Fullback

William Henderson, Green Bay

Specialists

Shane Lechler, Oakland - Punter
Adam Vinatieri, New England - Placekicker
Eddie Drummond, Detroit - Kick Returner

Defense

Defenses

Dwight Freeney, Indianapolis;
Julius Peppers, Carolina

Tackles

Kevin Williams, Minnesota; Richard Seymour, New England

Inside Linebackers

James Farrior, Pittsburgh; Ray Lewis, Baltimore

Outside Linebackers

Takeo Spikes, Buffalo; Derrick Brooks, Tampa Bay

Cornerbacks

Ronde Barber, Tampa Bay; Champ Bailey, Denver; Lito Sheppard, Philadelphia

Safeties

Ed Reed, Baltimore; Brian Dawkins, Philadelphia



was nothing I was expecting," he said.

"I'm a grunt workhorse, that's the way I look at it. That's what I do and I accepted that role a long time ago. I'm not expecting to get any accolades when I go out there."

Baltimore inside linebacker Ray Lewis made the team for the fifth time, the most among 2004 AP-Pro. Tampa Bay outside LB Derrick Brooks made it for the fourth time, as did Oakland punter Shane Lechler and Kansas City tackle William Roaf.

Repeaters from 2003 were Manning, Lewis, Roaf, Lechler and New England defensive tackle Richard Seymour — all AFC players.

"It's just a blessing," Seymour said. "When I came into the National Football League, I really didn't know how good I was going to be. Just to come here, to be considered one of the best, it's humbling."

Kick returner Eddie Drummond made it even though he missed the final month with a shoulder injury. That shows how much impact he had for the Lions before being sidelined: Drummond finished first in the NFL in punt returns (13.2-yard average) and second in kickoff returns (26.6 average). He returned two on kick for touchdowns.

In a loss to Jacksonville, he returned two punts for touchdowns in the fourth quarter and finished with six punt returns for 199 yards.

Jets' Vilma named top defensive rookie of year

BY ANDREA ADELSON
The Associated Press

HEMPSTEAD, N.Y. — Jonathan Vilma finished working out at the University of Miami one day last spring when he spotted fellow Hurricane alum Santana Moss.

They rushed up to Moss and talked him how much he wanted to play for the New York Jets. Little did Vilma know, the Jets wanted him, too. So they made him the No. 12 overall pick in the draft. Look at Vilma now.

A sensational debut season made him The Associated Press 2004 NFL Defensive Rookie of the Year. Vilma capped the regular season with a bang, returning an interception for a touchdown in a 32-29 overtime loss to the Rams.

Not bad for a player some skeptics said was too small to play middle linebacker in the NFL. Vilma always knew he would make an impact his first year. So did Moss, coach Herman Edwards and defensive coordinator Donnie Henderson.

"When we first drafted him, we knew we had a guy that had all the characteristics we were looking for," Henderson said.

"Leadership, passion for the game, the way he flew around and made plays. Obviously he's stepped up and took on the re-

sponsibility, and the opportunity has been good for him."

Vilma, who earned 21 votes from a national panel of 48 writers and broadcasters who cover pro football, came into training camp ready to win a starting job as part of a revamped Jets linebacking corps. Though Henderson penciled in veteran Sam Cowens to start, Vilma competed hard for the job.

In Week 2, Cowart sprained his left knee. Instead of struggling in the middle, Vilma stepped in as if he had been the starter for years. Pro Bowl defensive end John Abraham said Vilma made everything look too easy.

"After watching him play, a lot of people say he is already a vet," Abraham said. "He handled himself like a vet. He was far past his years when he came in here."

That has plenty to do with his college background. Vilma is just the latest in a line of stellar linebackers from Miami, following Dan Morgan, Ray Lewis and Nate Webster, among others. He became a starter his sophomore year, though if it was up to his father, Fritz, Vilma never would have set foot on a football field.

Fritz Vilma always feared his son would get injured. But Jonathan kept nagging until his father finally said he could play in high school.



New York Jets LB Jonathan Vilma received 21 of 48 votes to earn the AP defensive rookie award.

Vilma knew he wanted to become a Hurricane. Moss knew it, too, because he heard plenty about him from Vilma's sister, who was in one of his classes at Miami.

"Everyone talked about him," said Moss, who was a senior when Vilma was a true freshman. "When he came in and made play after play you always thought when he takes over this thing and learns it, he is going to be dominant. It's shown. When he came in I had no doubt in my mind he was going to be that type of player."

Vilma had one of his best games against Arizona in November, making 10 tackles, with an interception and fumble recovery to stop two fourth-quarter drives.

Crennel given OK to meet with 49ers

The Associated Press

SANTA CLARA, Calif. — The San Francisco 49ers received permission from New England on Thursday to interview Patriots defensive coordinator Romeo Crennel for their coaching vacancy.

One day after firing Dennis Erickson, the 49ers set out to find his replacement. Crennel will be the first candidate to interview for the job when he meets with team officials Saturday. Crennel also is scheduled to interview with Cleveland on Friday.

Owner John York said Wednesday when he also dismissed general manager Terry Donahue — that his first priority is hiring a coach.

Crennel has been New England's defensive coordinator since 2001, helping the team win two Super Bowl titles and go 14-2 this season.

Crennel also won two Super Bowls as an assistant for Bill Parcells with the New York Giants.

Interviewing Crennel, who is black, against an NFL rule that requires teams to interview at least one minority candidate for coaching vacancies.

York hinted Wednesday that he was interested in Southern California coach Pete Carroll, who has won two straight college championship this week. Carroll



said Thursday that he has no interest in the job.

"I have not been contacted, I don't expect to be contacted, and I'm not interested," Carroll said.

Ex-Cowboy Goodrich's death denied in hit-and-run accident

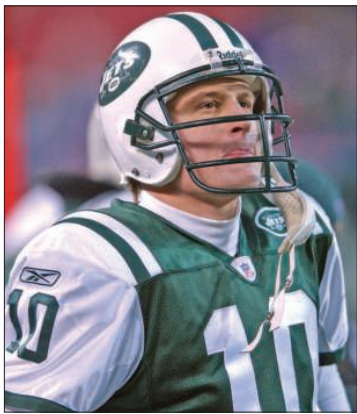
DALLAS Former Dallas Cowboys defensive back Dwayne Goodrich's appeal of his conviction in a deadly hit-and-run accident two years ago was denied Thursday.

He was convicted in August 2003 on two counts of criminally negligent homicide and sentenced to 7½ years in prison.

Demont Matthews, 23, and John Wood, 21, both of Plano were rescuing a driver from a burning car on Interstate 35 when they were struck by Goodrich's BMW. He left the scene.

Goodrich told jurors that a sport utility vehicle blocked his view of the pre-dawn accident. He said he originally believed, or hoped, he had hit debris. Goodrich returned to the scene hours later and then turned himself into police.

Goodrich told KDFW that he feels bad that two "good men" died that night, but he doesn't think he should have to go to jail.



With quarterback Chad Pennington, above, still nursing a sore shoulder, the New York Jets will need RB Curtis Martin to be productive.

Martin: Jets RB quietly adding to great résumé

MARTIN, FROM BACK PAGE

So he became one of the best in NFL history in that area, too, joining Sanders as the only players to start their careers with 10 straight 1,000 yard seasons. In addition to everything else he did this season, Martin quietly moved up the NFL career rushing list into fourth place, passing Hall of Famers Eric Dickerson, Tony Dorsett, Jim Brown, Marcus Allen and Franco Harris.

"It couldn't happen to a better player in our league," Jets coach Herman Edwards said. "You're talking about a class guy, a guy that's under a radar screen for most of his career. I'm glad I got to watch it and be a part of it. To watch him achieve that, I think it's outstanding."

Though Martin might not have the attention of the nation, he certainly has that of the NFL.

"He's a great one," Chargers coach Marty Schottenheimer said. "I've always admired him. He goes about his business and there's not a lot of fanfare and there's not a lot of pomp and circumstance. All he does is bring it to you every Sunday."

Martin surely will have to bring it in the playoff game against San Diego. He ran for 119 yards and two touchdowns in the first meeting, a 34-28 victory. The Jets stopped the running game even more, because quarterback Chad Pennington still has a sore right shoulder, and Martin is their best hope at taking the crowd out early and helping the Jets play ball control.

If they can advance, Martin will be closer to the one thing missing from his résumé: A Super Bowl victory.

So he again will help his team in the only way he knows: working hard and, as always, without

New York Jets (10-6) at San Diego Chargers (12-4)

Sunday
2 p.m. Central European Time
NFL Atlantic/Pacific Radio
OPENING LINE: Chargers by 5
RECORD VS. SPREAD — Jets 7-7; Chargers 1-1

SERIES RECORD — Chargers lead 17-1-1
LAST MEETING — Jets beat Chargers 34-28 on Sept. 19 at San Diego.
LAST POSTSEASON MEETING — First meeting

LAST WEEK — Jets lost to Rams 39-23 on Sept. 12 at San Diego.
JETS OFFENSE — OVERALL (12), RUSH (2), PASS (22)

JETS DEFENSE — OVERALL (7), RUSH (6), PASS (15)

CHARGERS OFFENSE — OVERALL (10), RUSH (6), PASS (11)

CHARGERS DEFENSE — OVERALL (18), RUSH (6), PASS (11)

KEY MATCHUP — Jets' secondary vs. Chargers QB Drew Brees. In Week 2, Chargers were booed in their home opener. Brees sustained one fumble on helmet-to-helmet hit from Jets safety Jon McGraw. Jets rookie safety Eric Coleman had INT and fumble recovery, and Brees' knee is a factor for the first two INTs before being pulled for a long fumble. Brees hasn't done much wrong since then. He finished third in NFL with 104.8 passer rating and third-lowest INT percentage (1.8). Jets allow 207 yards passing per game. While Chargers' offense averages 210.4, Jets were susceptible to run in first meeting, but with Chargers' improved passing game, New York's expect a one-dimensional approach.

STREAKS, STATS AND NOTES — Game features two Pro Bowl RBs. Chargers RB LaDainian Tomlinson rushed for 1,239 yards and led league with 17 TDs rushing. Jets RB Curtis Martin led NFL with 1,697 yards rushing and had 12 TDs. Chargers are 9-1 in last 10 home games. Jets backed into playoffs, losing to Rams in Week 7. They had problems because Buffalo lost to Pittsburgh. "Jets had about 17 yards differential, second best in league," Chargers coach Herman Edwards says. Jets RB coach Herman Edwards says the RBs coach for Kansas City (1992-94) when Schottenheimer was Chiefs head coach (1989-98).

much fanfare. Only this time, he will have the NFL rushing list in hand.

"It is no surprise why we are here, it is because of what Curtis has done and what he has accomplished this season," center Kevin Mawae said. "It is a great accomplishment, and it is something he is going to remember for a long time."

Rams' Bulger hitting his stride as top-notch NFL quarterback

BY JIM THOMAS

St. Louis Post-Dispatch

ST. LOUIS — The decision-making has improved noticeably. So has the pocket presence, and the hot reads on blitzes. Yes, the red-zone interceptions raise red flags.

But the end-zone interception against the New York Jets on Sunday was as much a case of an imprecise route by Shaun McDonald as an errant throw by Marc Bulger.

Bulger's progress has been easy to overlook this season, given all of the issues, controversies, and soap operas swirling around Rams Park. But the overall picture is undeniable: Bulger is maturing into an upper-echelon NFL quarterback.

That was never more apparent than in Sunday's 32-29 overtime victory over the Jets. Playing with a bruised throwing shoulder that still isn't 100 percent, Bulger navigated the Jets' sixth-ranked offense for 450 yards passing and three touchdowns.

The yardage total was the fifth-best in Rams franchise history.

Bulger's passer rating (116.4) and completion percentage (74.4) in that game both were the third-highest in his career.

"I think he played very well in the pass," coach Mike Martz said. "But to say like he did when it counted... Three for three in the final drive. I think, six for eight in overtime. He's the guy you want on your team when it's all on the line, that's that's probably as well as he played."

Whereas predecessor Kurt Warner seemed to pick up the Rams' offensive system instantly, it has taken Bulger a couple of seasons to become fully integrated into Air Martz. But it looks like he's there.

"The football knowledge is so much more of the mental situations," Bulger said. "Game management, and knowing when to check the ball down. The game management, I think I've done a lot better."

"You have to learn by making mistakes," he said. "I've seen the protections. Study this, study that. But unless you make mistakes, I think that's when you learn more. So there are growing pains, but hopefully, I've stopped with the major ones."

Compared to last season, Bulger's passing yards, completion percentage, and passer rating are up. His interception total dropped from 22 in 2003 to 14 this season. Even factoring in that Bulger played in only 14 games this season compared to 15 a year ago, his interceptions have dropped from 1½ a game in 2003 to one per game this season.

"I think right now Marc is intellectually close to where Kurt was," Martz said. "I don't know if he's there yet, but he's close to such a tremendous ability to digest and decipher exactly what



St. Louis Rams quarterback Marc Bulger threw for 450 yards and three touchdowns against the New York Jets on Sunday.

was going down. It was like you could slow time down.

"And I think Marc is like that right now. But the difference between the two is Marc has such a dynamic delivery. The ball gets out of there so fast. And he's easily the most accurate guy we've had. Trent Green, I thought, was really accurate. I think Marc is there."

Bulger's completion rate of 66.4 percent this season is the second-best in franchise history, trailing only Warner's 67.7 percent in 2000. After missing 2½ games with the shoulder injury, Bulger completed 74.2 percent of his passes in victories over Philadelphia and the Jets.

Before the Philly game, Bulger put on the bold front, insisting that his shoulder was 100 percent. It was only afterwards that he conceded that wasn't the case. It's important, all right. In 11 quarters without him against Arizona, Carolina, and most of the San Francisco game, the Rams managed just two offensive touchdowns. In the two games he has been back, the Rams have scored 52 points.

"His development from the beginning of the year to now is just remarkable," Martz said. "His confidence level right now is sky high."

So is his teammates' confidence in Bulger. "If we protect Marc, Marc's going to make plays," wide receiver Isaac Bruce said. "He's been making plays all the while he's been a starter. He's a great player."

But great players win playoff games, something Bulger has yet to accomplish. In his only postseason appearance, Bulger threw three interceptions in the fourth quarter and overtime of the Rams' 29-23 double-overtime loss to Carolina.

He gets a second crack at the postseason Saturday in Seattle, a bit with a Rams team that has more flaws than the 2003 squad.

St. Louis Rams (8-8) at Seattle Seahawks (9-7)

Sunday
10:30 p.m. Central European Time
NFL Atlantic/Pacific Radio

OPENING LINE — Seahawks by 10
RECORD VS. SPREAD — Rams 5-10; Seahawks 5-11

SERIES RECORD — Rams lead 9-0 overall
LAST MEETING — Rams beat Seahawks 23-10 Nov. 14 at St. Louis

LAST POSTSEASON MEETING — First meeting

LAST WEEK — Rams beat Jets 32-29 on Sunday
JETS OFFENSE — OVERALL (17), RUSH (2), PASS (11)

JETS DEFENSE — OVERALL (17), RUSH (6), PASS (15)

SEAHAWKS OFFENSE — OVERALL (8), RUSH (6), PASS (11)

SEAHAWKS DEFENSE — OVERALL (26), RUSH (6), PASS (11)

KEY MATCHUP — Rams WR Torry Holt and Isaac Bruce vs. Seahawks QB Ken Lucas and Marcus Truitt. Holt (1,372 yards receiving) and Bruce (1,292) were fourth and fifth, respectively, in NFL while Holt had more TDs (10) than Bruce (6). It was Bruce who torched Seahawks in two meetings this season. He had 78 yards in OT win in October and 104 at Seattle.

STREAKS, STATS AND NOTES — Against common opponents Seahawks and Rams are 5-7, but Rams won both games against Seattle this season. In 1976, no team with 8-8 record has won a playoff game. Seahawks' RB Shaun Alexander was second in league with 1,696 yards and 15 TDs rushing.

SEAHAWKS DEFENSE — Seahawks' defense was tied for fifth in NFL with 23 INTs. Rams threw 22 INTs, tied for third in league. Although they were blown out by Seattle, the Rams had four relief appearances when starter Marc Bulger was hurt. "Rams finished with league's 23rd minus-24 turnover differential. Since 1970, merest, the record for minus-24. Seahawks were plus-8."

So can Bulger ever make fans forget about Warner? Even just a little bit?

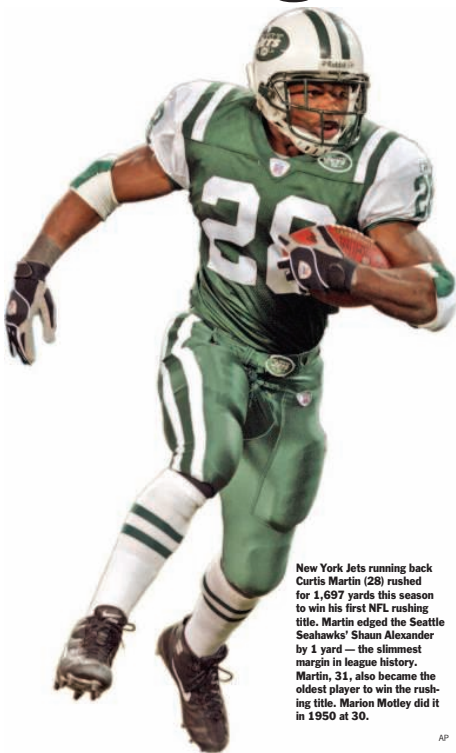
"Not until he wins a Super Bowl," defensive end Leonard Little said. "I think it's going to take that, but even if it takes a year or around here remember Kurt from winning the Super Bowl. Marc's that caliber of a quarterback. And if he can carry a team on his own merits, he will. So he's going to have his opportunities." Starting Saturday in Seattle.

SPORTS

Martin gains momentum



Record-breaking QB Manning
unanimous choice for AP All-Pro Team,
Page 34



New York Jets running back Curtis Martin (28) rushed for 1,697 yards this season to win his first NFL rushing title. Martin edged the Seattle Seahawks' Shaun Alexander by 1 yard — the slimmest margin in league history. Martin, 31, also became the oldest player to win the rushing title. Marion Motley did it in 1950 at 30.

AP

Fresh off his first NFL rushing title, Jet chasing bigger prize in playoffs

BY ANDREA ADELSON

The Associated Press

HEMPSTEAD, N.Y.

He came so close so many times before, Curtis Martin started to wonder whether he would ever win a rushing title.

Bigger names always surpassed him: Priest Holmes in 2001, Edgerrin James in 1999, Emmitt Smith and Barry Sanders in 1995. So while more popular players took the headlines, Martin kept working, kept setting lofty goals, kept believing that it would be his turn one day.

So on a tarmac in St. Louis on Sunday, the Jets' veteran finally got the news he always wanted to hear. He beat out Shaun Alexander for the NFL rushing title. By 1 yard. His mom, monitoring the Seahawks-Falcons game, kept Martin updated while the team waited on an airplane to head back home.

"That's the one individual accomplish-

ment I'm most proud of in my entire career," said Martin, preparing to lead the Jets in their wild-card game against San Diego on Saturday.

There had been plenty of achievements for the 31-year-old Martin, in his 10th NFL season. But this one seems most impressive, and could cement his place in the Hall of Fame. The quiet, humble back from Pittsburgh came into training camp in the best shape of his career, eager to prove he had plenty left in his legs.

He set three goals for himself: to run for 1,700 yards, win the rushing title and make the Pro Bowl. He was so obsessed with reaching 1,700, he made that his security code to get into the building at Jets headquarters. Unfortunately for Martin, he finished just 3 yards short of the mark.

Nonetheless, he ran for a career-high and team-record 1,697 yards, shattering his old mark of 1,513 to beat out Alexander by the slimmest margin in NFL history. The next closest was 7 yards in 1990, when Sanders topped Thurman Thomas.

Martin also became the oldest player to lead the NFL in rushing, surpassing Marion Motley, who did it in 1950 at the age of 30. And he also made his fourth Pro Bowl and his first All-Pro team.

"I knew that if I put the work in, if I sowed the right work, I believed that I could reach what I felt," Martin said. "This year was living proof of that. It is something that I am grateful for, but at the same time humbled by, simply because at the age I am, to have the ability and the mind-set to be consistent and perform the way we have this year, I am very humbled by it."

Martin generally has stayed out of the spotlight. There were always flashier backs, such as Smith and Terrell Davis. There were always craftier, more elusive backs, like Sanders. There were always bigger backs like James.

None of that ever bothered Martin, known more for his deliberate running style. He never asked for the headlines, never starred in commercials, never graced the cover of video games. Martin wanted just one thing: consistency.



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